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Crossing Boundaries: Transnationality, Intertextuality, and Intermediality in the Work of Guillermo del Toro

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Crossing Boundaries: Transnationality, Intertextuality, and Intermediality in the Work of Guillermo del Toro

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Abstract

Crossing Boundaries: Transnationality, Intertextuality, and Intermediality in the Work of Guillermo del Toro

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This thesis explores the hybridity found in both the work and identity of Guillermo del Toro through the lens of his transnationality, intertextuality and fandom, genre hybridity, and intermediality. Using del Toro's films as case studies, this thesis analyzes the ways in which del Toro expresses his hybridity through his films in addition to his self-expression through social media platforms like Twitter and his own personal artifact collection of fantasy and horror memorabilia. Particularly, this thesis explores the ways in which del Toro is able to cross boundaries, between nations, between texts, between genres, and between forms of media.

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Chapter One: Introduction

RESEARCH QUESTION, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE

In a 2006 interview, filmmaker Guillermo del Toro described the process of storytelling as a work of alchemy. "You need the vile matter for magic to flourish," he said. "You need lead to turn it into gold. You need the two things for the process" (Murray). Del Toro was referring to the necessity of darkness in children's fairy tales, but his assessment also accurately describes his own approach to filmmaking. As both a Mexican auteur and a Hollywood filmmaker capable of blockbuster box office success, as both an original voice and a film fan prepared to draw from the texts that came before, and as a geek auteur unafraid to subvert genres and blend media, del Toro is a truly hybrid filmmaker.

Contemporary scholarship on the writer-director does focus, to an extent, on this hybridity to show why del Toro tells certain stories, how those stories relate to previous texts, and how those stories can be classified. However, there is still a gap in the scholarship. There are themes that need to be explored in more detail. Particularly, further scholarship is needed to explore the effect that del Toro's transnational identity has on the narrative of his films, such as with his 2013 film *Pacific Rim*. Moreover, more research is needed to examine how his dual identities as a fan and a filmmaker have affected both his films and his public persona as expressed through social media and interviews, and there is still not enough research looking at how del Toro tells these stories, an analysis of the

ways in which he uses style and storytelling devices to convey his narratives. The purpose of my exploratory research questions, then, is to address this gap with a deeper exploration of the ways in which del Toro is able to tell his stories and fantasies of monsters and ghosts and heroes through the practice of intermediality, or using various media to tell his stories. My central research questions, then, are the following: How does del Toro's identity as a transnational film fan influence his films and his own crafted public persona? Further, how does del Toro employ particular storytelling methods and media to convey his narratives? What combination of storytelling methods and media, such as literature, oral storytelling, art, and music, allows del Toro to fully exercise his hybridity as a filmmaker?

Throughout this thesis, I use the terms "transnational" and "global" to refer to del Toro's international, boundary-crossing status. In their essay "Global and Local Hollywood," Ben Goldsmith, Susan Ward, and Tom O'Regan write:

> "Global Hollywood" does not only refer to those films made in southern California; rather it points to the fact that "Hollywood" is a space of relations and flows, as much as it is physical space…. [I]t encompasses the money, people, companies and places from all over the world which are now involved in film production with Hollywood partners. (1)

It is this definition of "global" that I refer to when classifying del Toro as a global filmmaker. He is global in the sense that his identity transcends physical space to encompass multiple national sources. *Pacific Rim*, for example, was inspired by Japanese monster movies, was set in multiple countries throughout the world, was shot in Canada with Hollywood funding, and was distributed through Legendary East in China. The

categories of global and transnational, then, contextualize the boundary-crossing nature of del Toro's career.

One reason to conduct this study is to respond to current literature calling for research to bridge these gaps, as discussed below. Another reason this research is necessary and important is because of the growing status of del Toro's career. Having recently won the Academy Award for Best Director for *The Shape of Water* (2017), del Toro's talent is likely to influence new and emerging filmmakers. Without doubt, attempts will be made to copy his storytelling tendencies. It is important, then, to understand how he creates and tells his film stories. Further, in the burgeoning cinematic world of comic book and superhero adaptations, it is necessary to recognize that not all adaptations of texts and convergences of media come from these genres. Del Toro blends texts and media through the movie genre of horror as well as monster fandom, as well as drawing from gothic literature and the monster film canon. That is, del Toro's films are not like most comic book adaptations in that they come from a mix of different and very personal sources—the classic horror films, gothic literature, and monster movies to which del Toro feels a deep and personal connection. This personal approach has not yet been fully explored.

As discussed above, current scholarly literature does not focus enough on the question of how del Toro tells his stories. Since beginning his career in Mexico in 1993, del Toro has steadily secured his identity as an established global filmmaker simultaneously capable of crafting art house auteurist works and wide Hollywood box office success. In the two and a half decades of his career, scholarship surrounding del

Toro has focused, to some extent, on the hybridity inherent in both his personal identity and in his work. Multiple scholars have recognized his hybrid transnational identity as simultaneously Mexican and global, and use this insight to color their textual analysis of his films. Del Toro's reliance on intertextuality, calling upon past texts and stories ranging from classic fairy tales to gothic literature to the film canon to weave into his own narratives, coupled with his constant blending and rearranging of genre, where he mixes fantasy with horror and romance with the monstrous, further establishes his identity as a hybrid filmmaker. In his work and in his public persona where, through social media and interviews, he expresses himself as a dedicated and loyal fanboy, del Toro constantly crosses boundaries. In his acceptance speech for his recent Academy Award win for Best Director for his film *The Shape of Water,* del Toro said:

> I am an immigrant, like Alfonso and Alejandro, my compadres, like Gael, like Salma, and like many, many of you. And for the last few years, [we] have been living in a country all of our own. Part of it is here, part of it is in Europe, part of it is everywhere. Because I think the greatest thing our art does, and our industry does, is to erase the lines in the sand. We should continue doing that when the world tells us to make them deeper. (ABC Television Network)

This is what del Toro does in his filmmaking. He crosses boundaries and erases the lines in the sand, laying the groundwork for others to follow in his footsteps.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In my literature review for each chapter, I examine the ways in which scholars across the fields of film and media studies as well as cultural studies, have explored del Toro's hybridity, looking to build upon groundwork they, like del Toro, have laid, and to add to what is missing from existing analyses. In particular, this thesis will examine the work of Deborah Shaw across multiple texts, in addition to that of Ann Davies and Dolores Tierney, looking at their co-edited anthology *The Transnational Fantasies of Guillermo del Toro* (2014), in which they move the argument a step forward from Shaw's exploration of del Toro's personal identity, collecting essays that analyze the ways in which del Toro's hybridity is reflected narratively. For example, in her essay in the collection, Laura Podalsky notes that del Toro's films' "characterization of the monstrous can be understood as semi-allegorical commentaries on US society" (100).

While film scholar Deborah Shaw highlights the ways in which del Toro crosses national boundaries in his search for funding and his dedication to helping and inspiring other filmmakers in Mexico, Davies and Tierney indicate the ways in which del Toro highlights his transnational position on a narrative level within the films themselves with their respective essays in the collection "Guillermo del Toro's Monsters: Matter Out of Place" and "Transnational Political Horror in *Cronos*." However, further work needs to be done to combine these two approaches, analyzing both his personal identity and the content of his films together, as well as the role that his transnationality plays.

Similarly, I will examine other scholars' explorations of the role of intertextuality and its influence on del Toro's career, looking specifically at which literary and filmic texts

and monstrous figures del Toro deems significant. I closely examine the work of English Literature scholars Keith McDonald and Roger Clark in their book *Guillermo del Toro Film as Alchemic Art* (2014). In it, they seek the sources of hybridity in del Toro's films. Citing many past interviews given by del Toro, McDonald and Clark write, "To give a complete account of the major influences that have shaped [del Toro's'] work would almost require a separate volume, since in the many interviews he has given he has mentioned an extraordinary array of contrasting and diverse films that have had a significant impact upon the development of his art" (22). By exploring the intertextuality of his work, these scholars highlight both how del Toro's films relate to previous texts and what paths they open for future storytelling.

In this thesis, I expand upon this work by including an exploration of del Toro's fan identity. I will examine del Toro as super fan by analyzing an aspect of his output that has been ignored—his Twitter account. In doing so, I am building upon the groundwork laid here by McDonald and Clark in examining del Toro's commentaries and interviews. Further, McDonald and Clark's work, published in 2014, needs to be expanded and updated to include del Toro's recent efforts including *Crimson Peak* (2015) and, most significantly in terms of his monster fandom, *The Shape of Water* (2017).

In Chapter Four, I examine scholars' analyses of the hybridity of genre and media across del Toro's filmmaking career. For example, in her qualitative interview "What is a Ghost?: An Interview with Guillermo del Toro" (2002), Kimberly Chun describes the genre boundary-crossing nature of his film *The Devil's Backbone* (2001), writing:

> A hybrid war movie, Western, and classic ghost story, *The Devil's Backbone* takes a page visually from the more minimalist moments of surrealist Salvador Dali and the dramatically expansive landscapes of John Ford, while evoking such elegiac coming-of-age tales as *The 400 Blows* and *Spirit of the Beehive*. (28)

This tendency to mix genres in his films, as observed by Chun, continues across del Toro's blockbuster and art house productions, his Spanish-language and his English-language films. Juxtaposing Chun's research with that of Niamh Thornton as well as McDonald and Clark on del Toro's ability to blend genres allows us to see how he departs from convention to create his own unique hybrid version of multiple genres and, therefore, to take ownership of his own auteurist voice. In this way, the hybridity of his relationship to genre allows him to pave his own path and formulate his own creative vision more clearly. In this thesis, I expand upon this work by further considering the contextual meaning of the term "genre" as well as its theoretical background, asking not "What is a ghost?" but "What is a ghost story?" Further, Chapter Four explores not only the hybridity of genre but the hybridity of media forms as well. I examine the use of various media in del Toro's films, including the use of the lullaby, oral storytelling, painting, and gothic literature, exploring how del Toro uses these media to illuminate cinema's inherent intermediality.

Contextually, then, my research project situates itself within both film studies and auteur studies. By approaching the study of del Toro's films through the lens of auteur theory, or neoauteur studies, this research project assumes del Toro's authorial voice over that of, for example, his cinematographer or his producers, as well as over theoretical

assumptions of film as a medium of necessarily collective authorship. While I acknowledge the collaborative nature of filmmaking and, thus, authorship, here I focus on the distinct qualities of del Toro's films and study the unique "stamp" that he puts on them as a writer-director. It is in this specific context that my research is situated. The next section of this introduction addresses these and other theoretical concerns in addition to further discussing the methodology used.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

While acknowledging the inherently collaborative nature of film as a medium, my research's theoretical foundations lie in neoauteurism, in addition to neoformalism and genre studies. In his article "Auteurism Revisited," Robert Koszarski writes, "While there is certainly no need for a wholesale return to the 1960s, [the height of auteur studies], it seems obvious that a complete debunking of auteurism ignores one of the most powerful tools in the critical arsenal" (356). So, while my work is certainly centered around del Toro as an auteur, I also follow the work of Charles Ramírez Berg in his book *The Classical Mexican Cinema: The Poetics of the Exceptional Golden Age Films* with "a more nuanced rethinking of auteurism" that addresses film's collaborative nature and the drawbacks of a traditional auteur studies approach, analyzing the ways that del Toro draws from an established canon and operates within an established cultural and industrial system (3).

In addition to neoauteurism, my research is also based in neoformalism, as defined by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. I examine what filmmaking techniques, or methods, del Toro uses to tell stories in the genre of horror, monster, and fantasy.

Specifically, I will analyze the ways in which he moves and operates the camera, the shooting styles he chooses to employ within his monster narratives, and how these formal, technical choices encourage his audience to align with the monster figure. I examine the ways in which the formal aspects of his films, such as his use of color and set design, encourage this kind of alignment with the monster figure, while simultaneously exploring how del Toro's own social and cultural context determines his efforts as a filmmaker. In other words, as David Bordwell puts it in his book *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*:

> A narrative film exhibits a total form consisting of materials – subject matter, themes—shaped and transformed by overall composition…. and stylistic patterning. The formal options are constrained and constructed by a range of norms arising from formal principles, conventional practices of film production and consumption, and proximate features of the social context. (1)

In this thesis, I consider, then, del Toro's stylistic patterning through the lens of his historical and social context.

Finally, my research is further grounded in genre studies. In his essay "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," Rick Altman explores the history of genre theory, writing:

> [A]s scholars come to know the full range of individual Hollywood genres, we are finding that genres are far from exhibiting homogeneity…. Whereas one Hollywood genre may be borrowed with little change from another medium, a second genre may develop slowly, change constantly, and surge

> recognizably before settling into a familiar pattern, while a third may go through an extended series of paradigms, none of which may be claimed as dominant. (8)

In this thesis, I explore this relationship between genre and specific media further, examining both how film borrows from other media such as literature and theatre and how del Toro navigates this exchange between media in terms of genre. Further, I explore how del Toro's own works illustrate the inherent hybridity of genre and its resistance to classification.

Together, these three theoretical approaches allow my analysis of del Toro's work and identity to focus on both a close analysis of his individual films, relying on case studies and textual analysis, and a deeper exploration of the role of del Toro's social and historical context in the finished product of his work, drawing from both his social media identity and his own qualitative interviews.

While my primary method of data collection lies in the textual analysis of his films, I will also be incorporating secondary data sources in the form of del Toro's interviews, his own film commentaries and notebooks, and his use of Twitter as a fan platform to both promote and celebrate cinema. Potential ethical issues with the analysis of secondary data arise when one considers that this information was not collected for the purpose of answering my research questions. I have taken care, then, to be sure not to take information out of context and to always perform proper citation techniques. Furthermore, in my primary textual analysis of his films, both *The Devil's Backbone* (2001) and *Pan's Labyrinth* (2005) are Spanish-language pictures for which, as a non-Spanish speaker, I am

forced to rely on English subtitles. It is my responsibility to ensure that any analysis I have made is not wrongfully influenced by certain existing language or translation barriers.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

Following this introduction, the second chapter of this work centers on del Toro's transnationality, exploring how his transnational identity manifests itself in both his work and his public persona. To do this, I will perform case studies of both his 2001 film *The Devil's Backbone* and his 2013 film *Pacific Rim,* relying on both textual analyses of individual scenes and plot structuring in the films that emphasize the necessity of global cooperation as well as personal interviews and DVD commentaries from del Toro in which he comments on the importance of global cooperation and the difficulty of navigating global Hollywood studios. Expanding upon the work of Deborah Shaw, I will also explore del Toro's personal relationships and the role they play in his larger career trajectory.

In Chapter Three, I explore del Toro's identity as a film fan and how that fan-identity manifests in the intertextuality inherent in his work. I include case studies of *Crimson Peak* (2015) and *The Shape of Water* (2017), analyzing how each film illustrates del Toro's dedication to gothic literature and the horror genre, particularly the Universal monster movies of the 1930s. Further, in this chapter, I rely heavily on a closer examination of del Toro's Twitter identity and how he expresses his own fandom and love for cinema through his tweets.

In Chapter Four, I look at how del Toro crosses boundaries through his novel, personal, and idiosyncratic use of genre and intermediality. He finds ways to blend generic

conventions, such as with his work *The Devil's Backbone* (2001), which is both an historical drama and a ghost story. Further, I conduct a close textual analysis of *Pan's Labyrinth* and how del Toro plays with both genre and media, such as literature, oral storytelling, and the lullaby, within this film to efficiently and clearly tell his story. These various forms of media allow for clear communication, both on a diegetic and a non-diegetic level. While the diegetic and non-diegetic are usually separate in cinematic texts, del Toro chooses to blend the two in *Pan's Labyrinth*. Diegetically, Ofelia, the young protagonist, needs various forms of media to communicate with the worlds she occupies, while, on a non-diegetic level, del Toro is able to better convey information and meaning to the film's viewers. For example, in the film, when the young Ofelia is shunned from her ill mother's room and in the throes of distress, Mercedes comes to comfort her. Ofelia asks Mercedes if she knows any lullabies. Mercedes replies, "Only one, but I don't remember the words." Ofelia responds, "I don't care. I want to hear it anyway." Mercedes begins to hum the same melody that has dominated the score of the film. The lullaby now serves the dual purpose of comforting Ofelia on a narrative level and setting the tone for the viewer. The viewer will note that the soundtrack music and the diegetic music have now become one, allowing a deeper emotional connection between Ofelia, Mercedes, and the non-diegetic audience. Del Toro understands that the various media must work together in order for the "magic to flourish." In this chapter, I explore more closely how del Toro uses the practice of intermediality and the blending of genres to tell his stories through similar textual analyses of scenes. This is followed by a fifth concluding chapter.

To conclude this introduction, in this thesis there are, of course, some research limitations. As I am conducting primarily specific case studies, my findings cannot be freely applied to other texts. For example, this in-depth study of del Toro's films cannot be applied to the films of Alfonso Cuarón, who, arguably, occupies a similar position given their shared Mexico-Hollywood hybridity. Further, there are some that view textual analysis as inherently reductive and often not mindful of the context surrounding the production of the text. For these reasons, I have chosen to rely on secondary analysis of del Toro's interviews and commentaries, in order to provide some of this missing context. In my research, I have striven to keep these limitations in mind.

Chapter Two: The Transnational Identity of Guillermo del Toro

THE STUDY OF GUILLMERO DEL TORO

As both a Mexican auteur and a highly successful global filmmaker, Guillermo del Toro's identity is seemingly split in half. His Spanish-language art house pictures, such as *The Devil's Backbone* (2001), illustrate one side of his identity, while his Hollywood blockbusters, such as *Pacific Rim* (2013), illustrate another. However, del Toro's respective identities do not represent a true dichotomy of self in that each bleeds into the other. Del Toro's work in Hollywood influences his art house works, while his Mexican auteur identity affects the finished product of his international blockbuster productions. *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pacific Rim*, two seeming halves of a whole, illustrate both del Toro's tendency to fuse one identity into the other and the frustrations he encounters in not being able to blend the two identities entirely. Through the close analysis of his works, I will examine the ways in which del Toro's Hollywood productions illustrate, on the diegetic level as well as the extradiegetic, that, although he has not made a film in Mexico since his first film, *Cronos*, in 1993, del Toro has not abandoned or forgotten his home country. He continues to incorporate his national identity into his global films, while simultaneously using his global status to support Mexico. In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which del Toro is truly a hybrid filmmaker, exploring his transnational identity as simultaneously Mexican and Hollywood. In the end, del Toro needs the two parts for the magic to flourish.

Much of the current scholarship on del Toro's transnational identity focuses on placing the filmmaker within the context of his fellow Mexican auteurs, Alfonso Cuarón and Alejandro González Iñárritu. In academia and in the focus of mainstream cinema, del Toro is consistently placed into the same category as his Mexican compatriots, despite the fact that each of these three filmmakers no longer direct films within Mexico or with Mexican funding, with the exception of Cuarón's recent return to Mexico with *Roma* (2018). Deborah Shaw does this in her 2013 work *The Three Amigos: The Transnational Filmmaking of Guillermo del Toro, Alfonso Cuarón and Alejandro González Iñárritu*, which identifies del Toro as one voice among a group of voices of Mexican filmmakers that have moved beyond Mexico. She writes, "All three [del Toro, Cuarón, and Iñárritu] have global auteurist ambitions which Mexico, with its limited funding possibilities, has not been able to accommodate" (2). As Shaw notes, del Toro has not made a film in Mexico or with Mexican funding since *Cronos*, turning instead to funding from Hollywood and Spain. Other scholars writing on the Three Amigos similarly focus on the ways in which these directors have moved beyond their national roots as they have made Hollywood films. Thus, while scholars continue to categorize del Toro with his compatriots, the emphasis is on the separation of del Toro from Mexico filmmaking.

However, such scholarship consistently overlooks del Toro's continued dedication to and reverence of his home-country. Even as del Toro and his compatriots continue to work within the Hollywood system, they have not forgotten their Mexican roots entirely, choosing instead to remain connected to each other and to their home-country through outreach programs that encourage amateur Mexican filmmakers, participation in and

support of national film festivals in Mexico, and constant outward acknowledgement of their national identity, such as del Toro's emphasis on Mexico in his recent Oscar speeches and his fervent support of Cuarón's success with the Mexican-set, -funded, and -shot *Roma*. In a 2013 interview, while promoting *Pacific Rim*, del Toro spoke of his physical separation from Mexico in relation to the lack of spiritual separation he feels. Ikam Acosta writes, "*Pacific Rim* creator Guillermo del Toro is another celebrity who will not return to his Mexican birthplace to live because of political instability… He will not film in Mexico for security reasons" (Acosta 2013). He quotes del Toro from 1998 discussing the abduction of his father, "Unfortunately I have to leave Mexico after my father's kidnapping. Creatively, I would like to come back with the assurance that there will be no problem with abductions… emotionally and artistically I would love to return to Mexico" (Acosta). This chapter will explore that emotional and artistic connection that allows del Toro his truly transnational identity, crossing and eliminating national boundaries and working with Mexico in spirit even as he is physically separated from his home-country.

In her work *The Three Amigos*, Shaw studies del Toro as a transnational auteur, exploring the industrial context of his work. She writes, "Del Toro represents a certain type of global auteur who can weave in and out of national contexts and challenge clear-cut distinctions made in the international market between Hollywood commercial film, independent cinema, and art house foreign-language film" (46-7). Shaw's emphasis on del Toro's transnational identity coupled with del Toro's own efforts to highlight his enduring connection to Mexico are representative of the determinations of scholars regarding his place in the global film conversation. Just as del Toro declares himself to be a global,

boundary-less figure while simultaneously highlighting his connection to other Mexican filmmakers in his Oscar acceptance speech, as quoted above, Shaw similarly ensures that del Toro is kept in conversation with his fellow Latin American auteurs, arguing across multiple works for del Toro's identity as transnational.

In her book *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking Into the Global Market* (2007), Shaw addresses the transformations that Latin American cinema has undergone since 2000, most specifically in regards to its increasing international visibility. Noting del Toro's influence on the global market, Shaw highlights the circumstances that have allowed Latin American cinema's increased global popularity, while raising concerns over the way in which these circumstances hinder the stories that Latin American filmmakers are able to tell. Shaw traces the improved international funding opportunities to the filmmaker's increased willingness to produce international audience-friendly films. Following Shaw's argument, one could trace del Toro's turn toward the blockbuster power of superhero films, such as with *Pacific Rim* (2013) in addition to his *Hellboy* films and *Blade II*, to his need to continue to acquire international funding. However, Shaw goes on to note that, because the majority of their funds are secured internationally, Latin American filmmakers must work within "the confines of the globalized film markets" (3). In other words, films without this international, blockbuster appeal, films that are more experimental or, perhaps, locally-focused, are unable to secure funding and are either not made or not distributed outside of national borders. Shaw calls for film scholars to recognize these constraints when studying Latin American cinema, and, by extension, the work of del Toro. However, expanding upon Shaw's argument here, one could argue that

del Toro has managed to secure a career in which he works both "within the confines of the globalized film markets" (3) with his blockbusters and outside of these confines with his art house productions, such as with *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), *The Shape of Water* (2017), and *The Devil's Backbone* (2001). Thus, despite Shaw's warnings, del Toro has managed to find a hybrid balance in his transnational identity. It remains to be seen, but, with his recent Oscar success, it is likely that del Toro's ability to navigate the terrain of the globalized film markets and secure funding for his art house productions will only grow going forward.

Shaw, with her later work *The Three Amigos*, cited above, acknowledges this balancing act of del Toro's, expanding upon her own previous argument. She identifies del Toro's identity as a hybrid one, a transnational figure that is both Mexican and global simultaneously, holding onto his Mexican identity even as funding opportunities pull him away from his home-country. Here, Shaw writes, "[del Toro has helped] harness a collective identity within Mexico and has used his international status to take on the role of advocate and ambassador for the national film industry" (2). In this way, Shaw shows that, despite the fact that he has not made a film in Mexico since his first, instead relying on Hollywood and Spanish funding, del Toro remains dedicated and loyal to Mexico. Published in 2013, prior to the global release of *Pacific Rim* and the increased popularity and visibility of del Toro in his post-Oscars success for *The Shape of Water*, Shaw's work requires expansion and further thought, applying ideas of his transnational influence to his increasingly expanding voice. For example, Shaw's discussion of del Toro's search for

funding lacks mention of his recent funding deal with Fox Searchlight Pictures, which will only help to increase and expand del Toro's influence and voice.

This ability of del Toro's to move beyond national boundaries and into the transnational realm in search of funding opportunities is discussed further in the co-authored book *The Transnational Fantasies of Guillermo del Toro* (2014). Here, Ann Davies and Dolores Tierney move Shaw's argument another step forward, collecting essays that analyze the ways in which del Toro's transnational hybridity is reflected narratively, as discussed above in the introductory chapter. To summarize, just as Shaw highlights the ways in which del Toro continues to cross national boundaries in his search of funding and his dedication to helping and inspiring other filmmakers in Mexico, Davies and Tierney indicate the ways in which del Toro highlights his transnational position on a narrative level within the films themselves. In this chapter, I will be expanding this exploration to include an in-depth look at the transnational elements on the narrative levels of *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pacific Rim*, two films underexplored by current scholarship on del Toro's transnationality.

Scholarship on del Toro has focused extensively on the multinational expanse of his various influences. As quoted in the introduction, in her qualitative interview "What is a Ghost?: An Interview with Guillermo del Toro" (2002), Kimberly Chun teases the various nationalities of the films, filmmakers, and artists that have influenced del Toro, such as John Ford and Salvador Dali. This tendency to draw inspiration from the works of multiple nations and their genre influences, including the United States, Spain, and France among others, continues across del Toro's blockbusters and his art house productions, his

Spanish-language and his English-language films, resulting in his transnational identity, which ignores national boundaries, choosing instead to draw from all that is available. Del Toro, too, acknowledges his affinity for genre hybridity, remarking to Chun, "The mix of genres [in *The Devil's Backbone*] was so adventurous. What I wanted to do was meld these two things, [the Western and the horror], seemingly so different, together" (30).

Keith McDonald and Roger Clark continue this exploration in their work *Guillermo del Toro: Film as Alchemic Art* as well, looking at *Cronos* and *Mimic* (1997) in particular. McDonald and Clark move a step beyond Chun, crediting del Toro with not just a mix of genres and national influences but arguing that the use of that alchemical mixing process leads to a higher level of artistic expression. McDonald and Clark argue that del Toro's "Surrealist Gothic sensibilities" elevate the Hollywood creature feature to a higher level of art (107). In other words, del Toro's ability to operate transnationally elevates the artistic level of existing Hollywood film production as he draws from all that is available regardless of national boundaries. These explorations of hybridity through intertextuality, genre-mixing, and intermediality will be examined more extensively in chapters three and four of this thesis.

Dolores Tierney's essay "Transnational Political Horror in *Cronos* (1993), *El Espinazo del Diablo* (2001), and *El Laberinto del Fauno (2006)*" (2014) furthers the exploration of del Toro as a hybrid, transnational figure, while also highlighting the role of intertextuality in the finished product of his film productions. Writing about his three Spanish-language pictures, all of which feature horror elements, Tierney praises the genre because of its "classical Hollywood origins that effectively absorbed a range of stylistic,

cultural, and industrial practices of nations outside the United States" (163). In other words, the horror genre and, by extension, del Toro's use of it must draw from specific texts that expand across national cultures and contexts. That is, del Toro and horror rely on transnational intertextuality to tell stories.

In particular, Tierney highlights the transnational intertextuality at play in del Toro's first film, writing, "This [transnationality] includes *Cronos*'s acknowledgement of Mexico's own horror/fantasy film tradition, which is heavily hybridized, drawing in particular on the style, iconography, and even narratives of the 1930s Universal horror films *Frankenstein* (1931) [and] *Dracula* (1931)" (163). Brad O'Brien argues similarly in his essay *Monstrous Adaptations: Generic and Thematic Mutations in Horror Films* (Richard Hand 2007), connecting del Toro's filmic figures to those of the supernatural literature and horror films that came beforehand, from multiple nations and cultures. In this sense, as both Tierney and O'Brien indicate, del Toro's characters are never wholly original. His films and his characters rely on this transnational intertextuality, drawing from the past and what came before in order to tell their stories and their truths. In this chapter, I will be expanding upon the transnational context of these arguments, while in later chapters, I will be further exploring the arguments Tierney and O'Brien make here about intertextuality in del Toro's work.

In the second half of this chapter, to explore the transnationality of del Toro's work, I will rely on the close textual analysis of del Toro's films, with a focus on *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pacific Rim*, in particular, while situating these two films in relation to a more general survey of del Toro's work. I have chosen these two films as the focus of this

chapter to allow a more concentrated focus and a more in-depth textual analysis. These two films each represent one half of del Toro's identity as both Mexican and global, as well as both independent auteur and studio director. Through the close textual analysis of his films, I will be able to identify the existence of his transnational identity diegetically, a method that will expand current scholarship on the topic. Through the study of del Toro's own words through audio commentaries and interviews, I will be able to analyze his own reasoning for his actions and filmmaking decisions.

Because I have chosen to ground this thesis in neoauteurism, my work centered around del Toro as auteur, I will not examine in-depth del Toro's efforts as a producer, as significant and varied as those efforts are. Though this decision provides a clear body of work to consider, it does, however, also exclude a number of projects in which del Toro was centrally involved. For example, a large period of del Toro's career was marked by the time he spent as producer on *The Hobbit* trilogy, working physically on-location in New Zealand. My thesis leaves open the opportunity for a more direct scholarly analysis of del Toro's efforts as a producer in both film and television.

THE TRANSNATIONALITY OF GUILLERMO DEL TORO

To study del Toro as a hybrid filmmaker, one who crosses various types of boundaries, it is necessary to explore his transnational identity as simultaneously Mexican, "Hollywood," and global. The effects of globalization and media imperialism can be seen in Hollywood's active pursuit of del Toro after the success of his work in Mexico. Hollywood, in effect, attempts to steal the auteur from his home-country. That is, after the

critical success of his first film *Cronos* (1993), Hollywood began to take notice of del Toro. Dimension Films and Miramax recruited the Mexican auteur to direct his first Hollywood studio production, a modestly budgeted horror film titled *Mimic* (1997). Del Toro describes the tribulations he faced making the film, "It was the first image that got me into deeper trouble because some of the producers hated that image from the start. They said, 'What are you doing? Are you making an art film out of a B-movie bug picture?' And I said to them, 'Well, I think they are one and the same.'" (Zicree 88). This exchange exemplifies the struggle of much of del Toro's career: navigating the wants and demands of Hollywood producers, while attempting to assert his art. For del Toro, these things should be one and the same, and his career is representative of an attempt to find the balance.

Because of del Toro's identity as a Mexican auteur with his beginnings rooted outside of the Hollywood system, the writer-director is able to bring something new and different to each of his Hollywood blockbuster productions. However, as his experience with *Mimic* shows, del Toro did not always have the ability to navigate the wants and demands of the Hollywood system. His initial foray into the Hollywood studio system resulted in disappointment, a loss of authorial voice, and a desire to return to his Spanish-language roots. Therefore, after his disappointing first experience in Hollywood with *Mimic*, del Toro decided to return to Spanish-language art house pictures with *The Devil's Backbone* (2001), effectively moving away from Hollywood**.** With a smaller budget, del Toro could reassert his creative control. However, one might argue that it is only because

of his experience working in Hollywood that he is able to produce and appreciate the freedom of his smaller auteur works.

Desiring a return to his national roots with *The Devil's Backbone,* the writer-director's first version of the script was set during the Mexican Revolution and in Mexico (Chun 2002). However, as with any art house picture, del Toro encountered funding problems. After unsuccessful attempts to acquire full funding in Mexico, del Toro moved the setting to the Spanish Civil War. He created his own production company, Tequila Gang, and teamed with the Almodóvar brothers and the Mexican Anhelo Producciones to produce the Spanish-Mexican, transatlantic art film *The Devil's Backbone* (Davies 168). In this way, del Toro remained separated from Mexico because of funding issues, the very thing that initially pulled him away and into Hollywood. Del Toro once again crossed national boundaries, both extradiegetically in terms of production and diegetically, rewriting the narrative to a new national setting in Spain.

Further, while del Toro gained creative control by temporarily leaving Hollywood, he lost the advantages of larger budgets and production quality. Originally hoping for seven million dollars to bring his orphanage story to light, del Toro was only able to acquire four and a half million dollars, requiring script revisions and cost-effective shooting techniques (Hardcastle 100). Working with a smaller special effects team than he had with *Mimic,* del Toro struggled to produce an image of the ghost on screen with which he was satisfied. Working closely with his team, del Toro obsessed over the translucency of the ghost and the saturated red color of the blood from his head wound. While del Toro had to work with a smaller, less experienced team to produce the effects for this film, he

enjoyed full creative control, arguing with the team about the fragile, doll-like quality of the ghost and winning the argument, unlike his experiences with Hollywood and *Mimic.* In this sense, del Toro lost the advantage of large budgets and experienced studio professionals but gained full creative control and decision-making powers.

Figure 1: The Ghost of Santi, the murdered orphan, with blood pouring from his head wound

Despite del Toro's desire to leave behind the politics of Hollywood movie making for his smaller, more personal film, he did take with him the lessons in film production that he learned while working on *Mimic.* In an interview for *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), del Toro remarked, "Making *Mimic* was a crash course in Hollywood movie making" (Rodriguez). *The Devil's Backbone* thus benefitted from del Toro's professional experience working in Hollywood. The auteur learned both what he wanted to do and what he wanted to avoid in

his filmmaking. *The Devil's Backbone,* for example, has one setting: the orphanage. This script change was due in part to the film's small budget, but del Toro was also able to use the isolation to his advantage, intensifying the classical Hollywood style to place emphasis on the boys' isolation. Throughout the film, del Toro made ample use of close-ups and extreme close-ups while avoiding long shots, creating an atmosphere of claustrophobia and futility. Working in Hollywood, del Toro was able to learn from the Hollywood style he grew up watching and adjust his own filmmaking techniques accordingly. In this sense, del Toro benefits from his transnational identity, moving between nations and across film cultures, drawing only what he needs from Hollywood or what he needs from Spain, thus using his transnationality as a selective process to perfect his craft.

After Sony Pictures Classic distributed *The Devil's Backbone* in the United States to small art house cinema success, del Toro returned to Hollywood, determined to continue making his smaller art house pictures outside of the system, while working on bigger-budgeted flicks within the studios, such as the *Hellboy* films and *Blade II*. However, throughout his career, del Toro has continued to try to infect Hollywood with his artistic inclinations. By the time he signed on to direct *Pacific Rim* (2013), del Toro had a long career of clashes with Hollywood studios behind him. Despite the critical and commercial success of his 2006 Spanish-language film *Pan's Labyrinth,* del Toro, in recent years, has still had much difficulty in acquiring studio funding for the various projects he wishes to pursue. Since 2006, del Toro has passionately marketed his script for an adaptation of *At the Mountains of Madness* all around Hollywood. After he received a final studio rejection that "no R-rated, two-hundred-million-dollar film had ever been greenlit to production…

and the movie wouldn't turn a profit without the child and teen audience," del Toro was forced to abandon the film he wanted to make and turn, instead, to *Pacific Rim* (Zicree 240). In this way, his summer 2013 big Hollywood blockbuster production only came to fruition because of his inability to completely blend his artistic inclinations with the Hollywood industrial complex. It remains to be seen whether del Toro's recent Oscar success will open previously closed studio funding opportunities.

Working with a budget of $190 million for *Pacific Rim*, del Toro attempted to both produce a marketable blockbuster and infect the film with his own love and nostalgia for the "monster movie" (*Audio*). Because of del Toro's identity as a Mexican auteur with his beginnings rooted outside of the Hollywood system, the writer-director is able to bring something new and different to each of his big budget Hollywood productions. He introduces themes of both his Mexican nationalism and his identity as one who works across global lines to *Pacific Rim*, creating a film that, while operating under normal Hollywood rules and production styles, incorporates ideas of global identity and cooperation, rather than the typical ideas of American exceptionalism usually found in these Hollywood summer blockbusters (e.g. *Independence Day*).

For example, in the audio commentary for *Pacific Rim*, del Toro reveals that he understands the final battle against the kaijus through the lens of his national history, remarking, "This was the Alamo, the final stand against these creatures" (*Audio*). Del Toro goes on to elaborate on the importance he saw in making the stand against the kaijus a global effort, rather than heroizing any one country. Each of the jaeger pilot pairs represent a different nationality with the Wei Tang triplets of China, the husband and wife

Kaidonovsky's of Russia, and the father-son pair from Australia. Tellingly, the most successful team, Raleigh and Mako who eventually save the day in the film's climax, are the only multinational pair of the entire group. Mako is a Japanese pilot, while Raleigh is the only American of the group. Their connection, then, is a transnational one in essence, and, in the end, it is only their global cooperation that saves the world from destruction. In this way, del Toro uses his transnational identity in the very fabric of his film's narrative, choosing to highlight the positive effects of global cooperation and the erasure of national boundaries. When these lines are erased, as with Mako and Raleigh, the world benefits. Just as these transnational efforts on the part of the diegetic characters allow for the defeat of the kaijus, the transnationality of del Toro's work allows for his continued success both in and outside of Hollywood.

Produced by Legendary Pictures, *Pacific Rim*'s incorporation of Chinese characters coincided with Legendary's attempts to break into China with Legendary East. Legendary and del Toro were a perfect team, then, together aiming this film toward Asian markets. Legendary was able to secure distribution deals, while del Toro drew from his global filmmaking and film-watching habits to produce a love letter to Asian monster movies set in a global, cooperative, modern world. Their efforts paid off, grossing $309,200,000 abroad, while only a third of that domestically (Box Office Mojo). The film, ultimately, grossed more in China than in the United States. In this way, even with his ostensibly Hollywood productions, del Toro's films continue to reach across national boundaries, securing more money globally than in the country of origin. Del Toro's is truly a transnational reach.

On the filmic level, del Toro manages to not only incorporate themes from his unique perspective as an internationally-successful Mexican-Hollywood auteur, but also strives to create a universal language across his film worlds. In *Pacific Rim*, the spines of the suits the pilots wear in jaegers harken back to his art house personal project *The Devil's Backbone* (Amazon Video Trivia). Del Toro repeats this visual language, establishing in a single shot both the history of the world's conflicts, with the Spanish Civil War referenced here, and the history of the monster film, referencing his own monster canon. In this way, on the filmic, visual level, del Toro incorporates the transnational into *Pacific Rim*.

Figure 2: The spines of the suits in *Pacific Rim* (left) mimic the spines of the mutated fetuses in *The Devil's Backbone* (right), highlighting how del Toro's films repeat visual motifs.

Similarly, del Toro encodes hints of the balancing act necessary to succeed in Hollywood. Fifty-five minutes into *Pacific Rim*, Dr. Newton Geiszler, played by Charlie Day, wanders the streets of Hong Kong and passes the intersection of Tull Street and Fong Road. Thomas Tull was the head of Legendary Pictures at the time and Henry Fong was one of the film's concept artists (*Pacific Rim Wiki*). Del Toro represents visually, encrypted within the film, the necessity of the intersection of studio demands and creative, artistic desires, the two halves that have dictated the path of his own transnational career.

Figure 3: Dr. Newton Geiszler passes the intersection of Tull Street and Fong Road.

While *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pacific Rim* differ monumentally in terms of scope and production quality, on the level of narrative and visual language, the two films reveal their shared creator. In *The Devil's Backbone*, the orphaned or abandoned boys must guard their temporary home against invasion from those who would do them harm: Jacinto and his lackeys. Their efforts are plagued by supernatural occurrences with the ghost of

Santi unable to rest peacefully without his revenge. They are haunted by both the past and the present dangers. Similarly, for all its action-packed sequences and global scale, *Pacific Rim* actually follows an identical framework. Raleigh, Mako, and Pentecost are each haunted by metaphorical ghosts from their pasts: Raleigh in his failure to save his brother, Mako in the loss of her family, and Pentecost in the physical and emotional toll of his years fighting. Further, like in *The Devil's Backbone*, the characters of *Pacific Rim* can only begin to exorcise these demons by confronting the present dangers. Like Jacinto attempts to invade the boys' home, the kaijus rise up out of the deep and attempt to invade and destroy the human world. Del Toro's use of a common visual language serves to highlight the narrative similarities present in each film. Regardless of their respective countries of origin, the films find common ground through del Toro's transnational reach.

As discussed earlier, however, del Toro's transnational reach moves beyond the realm of solely his own filmic efforts. Del Toro, especially in the wake of his Oscar success and heightened global status, works as a voice and an inspiration for Mexican culture even as he operates outside of its national borders in his own filmmaking. In the week following his Best Director Oscar win, del Toro held a series of masterclasses in his hometown at the Guadalajara Film Festival and set up the Jenkins-Del Toro International Film Scholarship "to be awarded annually to up-and-coming Mexican filmmakers interested in furthering their craft" (*Remezcla*). So, while he no longer makes films in Mexico, del Toro actively and engagingly supports the future of Mexican filmmakers, encouraging and even funding their efforts to spread their voices abroad.

Further, del Toro's transnational identity, both Mexican and global, is highlighted by his multilingual Twitter account. Tweeting predominantly about film, film and art history, movie-going, and his own filmmaking efforts combined with political tweets supporting global cooperation, del Toro, for the most part, plays to the audience demand of his followers, tweeting almost exclusively in English. On the rare occasions in which del Toro does tweet in Spanish, his native language, he is almost always tweeting about political and national controversy in Mexico. Recently, a group of Mexican film students were found killed and dissolved in acid, having gone missing while filming a school project in del Toro's home city of Guadalajara (*The Washington Post*). When reacting with shock, outrage, and sadness, del Toro chose to tweet in Spanish, reaching out to his home-country with pleas for introspection and change. Needing to connect with this specific country as opposed to the global world that his English voice on the global platform of Twitter usually allows, del Toro turned to his native language and spoke directly to his compatriots. In this way, del Toro's Twitter exemplifies his transnational identity, able to display his hybridity as both Mexican and global on a single platform.

In all of these ways, del Toro proves himself to be a hybrid, transnational filmmaker. He is both Mexican and global, an independent auteur and a studio director. Del Toro's ability to both reach across and eliminate national borders stems repeatedly from his ability to negotiate and adapt, combining his artistic inclinations with his blockbuster pursuits. It might be possible for del Toro to completely separate his Hollywood studio productions and his art house auteur works, but del Toro rejects this isolation in favor of finding a transnational balance that allows him to blend the two

identities. As *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pacific Rim* illustrate, each half of his transnational identity bleeds into the other. Del Toro must perform a balancing act to give each half of his dual identity life, the two parts allowing the magic to flourish.

Chapter Three: Intertextuality and Fandom in the Work of Guillermo del Toro

A FAN AND A VOICE

Just as he crosses the borders between nations, creating transnational films that belong to no single place or audience, Guillermo del Toro similarly crosses boundaries between texts, interacting and engaging with various cultural and artistic contexts in his filmmaking. As a lifelong fan of various art forms, including literature, film, painting, and oral storytelling, del Toro extensively references the books he grew up reading and the films he grew up watching in his own filmmaking. With his use of intertextuality, del Toro places his films in dialogue with the texts that came before. However, as multiple scholars have argued, film, as a medium, is, in many ways, inherently intertextual. Das Reetamoni summarizes this argument in her work "Intertextuality and Films," writing:

> The concept of intertextuality, as advocated by [Julia] Kristeva, is based on the Bakhtinian notion that every utterance is interdependent and interrelated with what has previously been said within a socio-political textual environment. Films as a form of art borrow heavily from the already prevalent customs, social and literary traditions. Films build a self-conscious intertextual relation with already available texts and discourses. (70)

In addition to this inherent intertextuality, since the beginnings of cinema, filmmakers have been directly and deliberately referencing or quoting other texts and films. In this way, del

Toro is not unique simply for his use of intertextuality. In this chapter, I will argue that it is the way in which del Toro expresses this intertextuality that makes him a unique filmmaker, both a film fan and an auteur with an original voice.

To clarify, in their book *Guillermo del Toro Film as Alchemic Art*, Keith McDonald and Roger Clark argue that it is del Toro's fan identity coupled with his status as an auteur that creates his unique voice. They quote Antonio Làzaro-Reboll, a Hispanic studies scholar, who said of the director, "Many cultural commentators describe del Toro as fan, connoisseur, craftsman, cinephile and auteur, since he is equally comfortable talking about films in Cannes as he is discussing them in front of fans at comic conventions" (Làzaro-Reboll, 2012, as cited in McDonald and Clark, 2014, p. 2). McDonald and Clark trace this intersection between popular culture fanboy and connoisseur of film, literature, and art throughout their work, relying on del Toro's film commentaries and interviews to paint a picture of the director as an alchemic, intertextual filmmaker with a unique voice that pulls from a vast array of sources. Building upon McDonald and Clark's work, I argue that del Toro's unique intertextual voice lies at the intersection of fandom and connoisseurship. However, I wish to further their argument by adding del Toro's most recent works *Crimson Peak* (2015) and *The Shape of Water* (2017), closely analyzing their sources and inspirations. I wish to complicate McDonald and Clark's argument by analyzing del Toro's status as a film advocate and fan on the social media platform Twitter. Del Toro's identity as an influential voice in the film and television communities outside of his own work has not been sufficiently studied by scholars. Relatively new to Twitter, joining the platform

in 2015, del Toro's carefully crafted voice and status on the platform—and how that voice blends with his identity as a filmmaker—still needs to be explored.

@REALGDT AND FANDOM

After joining Twitter in September of 2015, director Guillermo del Toro, under Twitter handle @RealGDT, began publicly sharing his artistic inspirations and passions with his Twitter followers, which include both his fans and his colleagues in the film industry. For the first few months of his Twitter activity, del Toro would tweet recommendations for one book, one film, and one piece of artwork a day. These works of art varied from paintings to favorite composers to sculptures and comic books. Occasionally, del Toro would elaborate on his artistic suggestions, citing them as inspiration for his own filmmaking or simply as something he thinks more people should experience and enjoy. In his first public tweet, del Toro wrote, "Hi- this is really me. Some others were posting with my name (God knows why?) so- here I am. I don't really use it much but I'll try!" (@RealGDT). In these few words, this opening tweet sets up del Toro's purpose on the platform in much that same way that an opening scene establishes the tone of a film. He joins the site out of a desire to protect his voice and his image from imitation, or mimicry, to borrow from the title of his film. Others were attempting to steal his name and his voice, so del Toro joins to protect it. Further, he makes a promise to his fans: "I'll try." This promise, to try to use Twitter, demonstrates, from the beginning, del Toro's desire to communicate with and give to his fans. Throughout his three and half years on the site so far, del Toro and his followers have crafted a give-and-take relationship, with

del Toro sharing pieces of himself and his films with fans while his fans give back to him through their support and conversation.

While del Toro does use his Twitter to promote his own projects, frequently tweeting promotional materials during the periods leading up to his film or television releases, he also tweets in support of other texts, authors, artists, and artistic works, using his established voice within the industry as a platform to elevate voices that have not yet been heard. In February of 2019, for example, he retweeted a string of female artists and their posts for the #VisibleWomen movement, aimed at promoting women in artistic industries in which they have traditionally been overlooked, and told his followers, "I cannot retweet all the brilliance contained within this hashtag: #VisibleWomen[.] absolutely breathtaking images by genial minds! Seek the hashtag #VisibleWomen" (@RealGDT). Most of the posts del Toro chose to retweet featured artwork in the realms of dark fantasy, folklore, and fairy tales, del Toro's own areas of interest and expertise. This combination of interest and expertise, as well as his desire to use his voice to help others, defines del Toro's identity on Twitter. He is both a fan and an expert, as well as an influential voice.

Del Toro uses his growing influence in the industry to speak out on Twitter in support of art that he loves and appreciates. In the case of Alfonso Cuarón's recent awards season success, *Roma* (2018), for example, del Toro tweeted heavily in support of the film, simultaneously promoting Mexican cinema, artistic merit, and his friend. He encouraged his followers to watch and appreciate the film for its beauty, both celebrating art and using his influence to help in the awards campaign. Del Toro has used his Twitter account to

wield influence in the television industry as well. In May of 2018, just two months after del Toro's big Oscar victories, the television sitcom *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013) was cancelled by Fox. On Twitter, fans responded to the news harshly with a wave of backlash against Fox and calls for renewal. Del Toro joined fans, writing a heartfelt plea to save the show: "Brooklyn Nine-Nine has given us fully human characters, beautiful, powerful, flawed, vulnerable, majestic… In whichever form, B99 must return. It will. And I will be there to watch. And, it is my hope that, this time, a lot more people do too" (@RealGDT). After thirty-one hours, the show was saved by NBC to the rejoicing of fans and del Toro alike. The fans and creators behind *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* praised del Toro and other outspoken celebrities, including Lin-Manuel Miranda, Sean Astin, and Mark Hamill, for their efforts in saving the show, deeming them the "#GuardiansOfThe99" (Jung).

Del Toro's influence in the industry, then, has grown tremendously with his career. Once unable to convince Miramax that a "B-movie bug picture" (Zicree 88) should be taken seriously, del Toro now uses his voice to support and speak out on behalf of works of art and artists that he believes deserve more. Through Twitter, he is able to simultaneously express himself as an artist, tweeting about the dark fairy tales and monster movies he loves, and support other filmmakers, artists, and creators of whom he is a fan.

SACRED MONSTERS AND BLEAK HOUSE

In addition to promoting his own films and other artists through Twitter, del Toro also uses his account—his voice—to proudly share his identity as a fan, particularly of fantasy, fairy tales, and monsters. Del Toro tweets about his artistic inspirations to show his followers how that fan identity is expressed through his own films. On February 16, 2017, for example, del Toro tweeted four pictures of the Gardens of Bomarza with the caption, "Bomarzo—the sacred monster park in Italy. Big inspiration for *Pan's Labyrinth*" (@RealGDT). In this 2006 monstrous fairy tale film, the young protagonist Ofelia wanders upon a magical tree (pictured below, right) much like the one del Toro identifies in the "sacred" monster park. This declaration of monster spaces as sacred sets the tone for the majority of del Toro's personal and professional endeavors. In his engagement with film, literary, and cultural history, he has always approached the monster figure and monstrous spaces as sacred and misunderstood.

Figure 4: Del Toro tweets about a sacred monster park that he claims as inspiration for *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Figure 5: Protagonist Ofelia wanders upon a tree reminiscent of the monster park.

This affinity for the monstrous is reflected materially in del Toro's substantive personal artifact collection Bleak House, a private museum of horror and monster memorabilia that del Toro has curated over the years, named after the 1853 Charles Dickens novel. Normally withheld from the public and used as del Toro's own private writing space, Bleak House has recently been temporarily opened by del Toro as a museum exhibit titled "At Home with Monsters." As the title of his exhibit suggests, del Toro's engagement with the horror, fantasy, and monster genres throughout his lifetime has resulted in an understanding of the monster figure as having more in common with humans than other monster films and texts would suggest. In the foreword to the book on his museum artifact collection, del Toro writes:

> To me, every Universal film turned into hagiography and every creature, a martyr. Monsters are, to this day, true family to me. They are not effigies collected for profit or due to completist mania. In Bleak House, I have built a temple to them, and within them I have built devotional shrines. I serve them—a power greater than myself—with abandon and unwavering dedication and love. (Salvesen 6)

In each of his films, as with *Pan's Labyrinth*, del Toro takes this love for the monster figure, this consideration of their identities as sacred, or, in other words, his fannish tendencies toward the monstrous, and uses these fan beliefs to elevate and further sacredize the monster.

In the second half of this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which del Toro's intertextual tendencies lead him to this sacredizing of the monster figure—and the texts which celebrate the monster figure—through the use of intertextuality in his own films by closely analyzing *Crimson Peak* and *The Shape of Water*. Firstly, however, I will analyze del Toro's Bleak House collection and how it, combined with his celebratory, fannish Twitter posts, illustrates his identity as a fan of the monstrous. In *Guillermo del Toro: At Home With Monsters*, a book detailing del Toro's Bleak House collection, Britt Salvesen and Jim Shedden write, "Guillermo del Toro is influenced by an array of objects, films, books, and artworks. Refusing distinctions between high and low culture, he is unapologetic about the things that move him…. Gill-Man and Frankenstein are as much the lifeblood of del Toro's work as Emily Brontë and Charles Dickens" (61). In fact, when one first enters del Toro's Bleak House, one is greeted with the giant, six-foot head of Frankenstein's creature, reminiscent of James Whale and Boris Karloff's 1931

Figure 6: Six-foot tall statue of the head of Frankenstein's creature, the focal point of del Toro's Bleak House collection.

interpretation, hanging over the staircase. This is complemented by and surrounded with baroque paintings, figurines of Japanese kaijus, vast literary libraries, comic books, and a wax figure of Linda Blair from *The Exorcist* (1973) among other artistic dark fantasy treasures. Del Toro argues in an interview on his exhibition that the power of *Frankenstein* and Frankenstein's creature needs to be remembered. He says, "By now the face of the creature has been domesticated into being in cartoons, in cereal boxes. People forget. They forget the impact it was to be in the theater and see the six-foot tall face of that creature peering at you. So, this gigantic sculpture reminds people of the power of that face" (q on cbc 00:18:30). This is what del Toro attempts to do with his physically-manifested fan identity. He tweets about monsters and the texts he loves and he curates museum exhibits celebrating these monsters and attempting to sacredize their memory and impact so that we, as a culture, will not forget their power and their influence.

In this same interview on the exhibit, del Toro discusses the merging of high and low art, saying,

> The exhibit is about reconciliation of your imperfection, and one of those reconciliations is that we can be equally inspired by high art and by low art; that you can find inspiration in a comic book or a pop TV program or a movie without going into the fan realm, not consuming it just blindly. You can repurpose it to a higher form. And [in the same way] you can find cues in fine art that you can bring to much more practical use in storytelling. (00:20:10)

In arguing for the cooperation of high and low art, del Toro makes a passing stab at "the fan realm" as blind consumption. In a 2009 article "Affirmational fandom vs.

Transformational fandom," fan blogger obsession_inc proposed two classifications of fandom: affirmational fandom, in which "the source material is re-stated, rules established on how the characters are and how the universe works," and transformational fandom, which "is all about laying hands upon the source and twisting it to the fans' own purposes" (obsession_inc). Here, Del Toro appears to be defining fandom in general as affirmational according to these classifications and is making a call to artists to "repurpose" the texts that they encounter and love to create something new and unique, borne of these previous texts but wholly something new of its own. According to obsession_inc's classifications, widely accepted by the fan studies community, then, del Toro is a transformational fan, taking texts, "laying hands upon the source," and making it all his own. Del Toro might hold the monster figure as sacred, but he still comfortable with taking monstrous texts and transforming them into something new. In these next two sections, we will analyze the ways in which del Toro uses intertextuality to make each text his own.

CRIMSON PEAK, GOTHIC LITERATURE, IDIOSYNCRATIC INTERTEXTUALITY

Long before del Toro joined Twitter, he was expressing his fan identity through his own films and artistic efforts. McDonald and Clark trace these intertextual references and allusions in their book, highlighting the role and influence of Gothic literature in del Toro's early films, including *Cronos* (1993) and *The Devil's Backbone* (2001). They describe the ways in which del Toro is able to capture the essence of a work or genre without making a direct adaptation, writing, "Central to this mode is the hybridity which emerges from appropriation, re-contextualization, and re-presentation: existing texts transformed into a

new entity made up of their various components – now as a coherent whole" (2). It is this appropriation, re-contextualization, and re-presentation that makes del Toro's use of intertextuality unique and transformational. He takes the works of which he is a fan and pulls them apart, putting various—but not random—pieces back together again. McDonald and Clark compare del Toro to Victor Frankenstein in this way; he is "compelled to create from used, discarded and diverse sources, with monstrous results" (3). It is this idiosyncratic intertextuality that makes del Toro's films unique. He pulls from those discarded and used sources to create something new, but it is always from sources that he loves and to which he feels a connection. Del Toro's intertextuality is borne of fandom and love. In this section, I will examine those fannish impulses as del Toro expresses them in *Crimson Peak*.

In the first scene following the prologue of Guillermo del Toro's 2015 film, the protagonist, Edith Cushing, tells the group of judgmental society girls snidely calling her "the town's Jane Austen" that she "would much prefer to be Mary Shelley" (00:05:50). In a film all about how the past influences and haunts the present, del Toro continually alludes to and makes specific reference to the literary and filmic pasts that have shaped his own present, his own work. As a lifelong fan of Mary Shelley and her seminal work *Frankenstein* (1818), del Toro incorporates Shelley's themes of family, isolation, lost innocence, and revenge into his own works, while also drawing from the range of Gothic literature that followed and surrounded *Frankenstein*. In an interview promoting *Crimson Peak*, del Toro said:

> I read E.T.A. Hoffman, Henry James, Edgar Allan Poe, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Great Expectations*—everything that's been affected by the gothic spirit. When I was a kid, one of my favorite writers was Edgar Allan Poe. He has that beautiful tale "The Fall of the House of Usher." Essentially, *Crimson Peak* is a cross between a classic gothic romance, like *Jane Eyre* or something like that, and "The House of Usher." I tried to capture the dark spirit that romance has. Marketing may contradict me, but *Crimson Peak* is not a horror film; it's a mixture of darkness and beauty, melodrama and eerie atmosphere. (Ferri)

Del Toro's push toward recognizing the Gothic roots of his own film highlights his specific identity as a filmmaker that relies on intertextuality. That is, if every film is inherently intertextual, drawing from what came before, del Toro's brand of intertextuality is defined by specificity, pride, and fandom. He highlights and praises his sources, always sure to credit them in interviews and on social media. He draws from what he loves and enjoys, and places atmosphere and tone above superficial references. Del Toro crosses the boundaries between texts in much the same way that he crosses national boundaries; he chooses to erase the lines in the sand, working with multiple texts to blend various cultural and artistic contexts and histories into his own filmmaking. In this way, his films contain a great deal of intertextuality, extensively referencing and quoting the literary and filmic canons that have come before. With his use of intertextuality, del Toro positions his films in conversation with the traditions and conventions of other works, while placing them in his own, new context.

In *Crimson Peak*, protagonist Edith Cushing longs to be a writer in a society in which men's voices are usually the only ones heard. Edith meets the handsome and mysterious English baronet Sir Thomas Sharpe, and the two soon marry and return to his family home, an old, decrepit house, a gothic mansion named Allerdale Hall, that moans and creaks and hides many dark secrets from the past. Throughout the film, del Toro makes direct reference to many classic texts from Gothic literature, including "The Fall of the House of Usher" and *Jane Eyre*. Del Toro also cites Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 filmic adaption of *Rebecca* as a major influence on the production design of the Sharpe family mansion. Del Toro takes from these many sources, picking out the pieces he needs and creating his own coherent whole, pulling *Jane Eyre*'s female-driven narrative in which "she falls in love, madly, with a man who cannot take her," Edgar Allen Poe's tale of a dwindling family driven to madness and isolation, and *Rebecca*'s haunting and oppressive mansion (Shaina411). When interviewed about Bleak House, del Toro attempted to describe the process of picking apart a work of art:

> The relationship we have with art is very fetishistic because art is a spiritual phenomenon. When you listen to a musical piece with an image—like the…design on the inside sleeve of a Pink Floyd record with drawings by Gerald Scarfe—or you are watching a movie and you listen to the Nino Rota score of a Fellini film, when you decompose the movie or album into its elements you can enshrine certain elements to the level of relics, like Catholics collecting relics of a particular saint. (33)

Interestingly, del Toro uses the word 'decompose' here to describe the process of breaking a thing down into its component parts, but the term can also refer to a rotting or decaying body, something that is dead. For del Toro, taking these various—but not random—pieces allows him to give new life to their artistic potential. At one point in the film Edith tells Thomas, "The past, Thomas. You're always looking to the past. You won't find me there. I'm here" (01:10:47). The use of various elements, or relics as del Toro terms them, does not position his work in a dead past but, rather, brings the past into the present. The relics are given new life.

CRIMSON PEAK AND METANARRATIVE

Crimson Peak opens, after the prologue providing Edith's childhood backstory, with the overhead shot of a book onscreen with the diegetic title *Crimson Peak*. The book opens and the camera zooms into the world of the novel. Throughout the film, the narratives of this novel and the film align, Edith acting as a narrator reading her own text, which del Toro's visual images then depict. Del Toro highlights visually the coincidence of the book's and the film's content in the opening frames by cutting from a shot of a rough illustration of Edith's town center in the book to a moving version of the same image on the level of the filmic narrative. The film ends with a shot of the book closing, now with the addition of an author's name on the cover: Edith M. Cushing, thus revealing the entire film to be Edith's story, Edith's novelistic interpretation. In this way, the book can be seen, in part, to serve as a frame for the narrative of the film. Edith's voiceover narration certainly demonstrates an omniscience that the diegetic Edith does not possess. However,

beyond using it as a frame, del Toro uses the novel to infuse his film with the quality of literariness.

From the very beginning then, this is a film that draws as much from literary sources as it does the filmic past. This is a film that calls attention to itself as such. At the beginning of the narrative, Edith is working on a manuscript of a ghost story, unaware of the path her life is about to take. Throughout the film, she and Thomas discuss the process of writing a novel. When Thomas asks if one of her characters will survive until the end, Edith says to him, "That's entirely up to him. Characters talk to you; they transform. They make choices as to who they become" (01:09:35). Del Toro, with *Crimson Peak*, certainly creates a story in which the characters have power over their outcomes. Just as del Toro's characters challenge the ghosts, villains, and pasts that attack and haunt throughout the film, just as they transform, del Toro transforms the ways in which texts can interact with and breathe new life into one another.

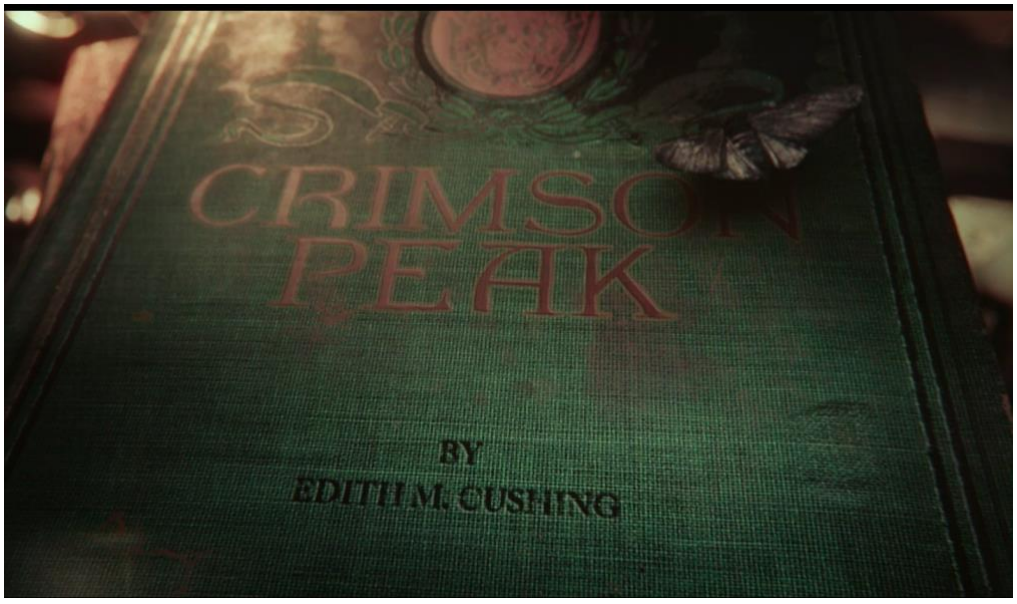

Figure 7: The closing shot of *Crimson Peak* in which the film is revealed to be Edith's novelistic version of events.

However, while the themes, tropes, and tone of Gothic literature do dominate the film, del Toro pulls from other sources and texts as well. In an interview about *Crimson Peak*, when asked about the artistic inspirations behind the film, del Toro replies, "John Atkinson Grimshaw, the Victorian painter, and Capar David Friedrich were a big influence on *Crimson Peak*. In the case of Grimshaw, if you watch *Crimson Peak* again, there are moments that look exactly like a Grimshaw painting—the falling leaves on the trees and the moon in the distance" (33). These painterly inspirations are clear throughout *Crimson Peak*, with the vibrant colors and moody atmosphere carefully crafted and controlled by del Toro. He goes on to say that the important thing about pulling from artistic inspirations is not "whether it is looked upon with a frown or is looked upon in a museum. The only thing that matters to me is to be true to the emotion I feel about that art" (35). Del Toro, then, references visual influences not only for their image content but also for their emotional content. In this way, while del Toro does draw from high art and paintings and references these texts in his films, he is also comfortable drawing from other artists and texts traditionally considered low art, such as comic book artist Jack Kirby, whom he also cites as inspiration for his work in this same interview. For del Toro, the practice of intertextuality is about, as McDonald and Clark argue, the re-contextualization and re-presentation of an already existing text. In this next section, we will examine the ways in which del Toro re-contextualizes the movie monsters he grew up watching as a young boy in Mexico.

THE SHAPE OF WATER AND MONSTER FANDOM

In the foreword "The Shape of Things to Come" to *The Shape of Water: Creating a Fairy Tale for Troubled Times*, Gina McIntyre's exploration of the production of the 2017 film, Guillermo del Toro writes:

> At age six, sitting in front of the TV one Sunday, I watched the Gill-Man (in *Creature from the Black Lagoon*) swimming, enraptured, underneath Julie Adams. He swam a few feet below her as she traversed the surface—an apparition of impossible beauty and grace. Pure cinema. The poetry of monsters. I felt Stendhal syndrome—like vertigo, overwhelmed by the sheer magnificence of that moment. And I felt a pang in my young heart, a longing—a hope—as I realized that the monster and the bathing beauty could never end this tale together. But I really hoped they would. (6).

In this way, del Toro describes his love for the monster figure of the Gill-Man. In *The Shape of Water*, del Toro takes this fannish affinity and uses it to expand and, ultimately, transform the popular culture narrative of the Gill-Man. In *The Shape of Water*, the Gill-Man finally does become the protagonist that a young del Toro believed him to be at age six. In this way, del Toro redefines the Gill-Man place's in popular culture, an effort supported by the film's popularity and critical success, ultimately winning Best Picture at the 2018 Academy Awards. Insisting upon calling the monster narrative "poetry," del Toro gives artistic voice back to the mute monstrous figure of the Gill-Man.

Julie Adams, the female star of *The Creature of the Black Lagoon* (1954), who, in del Toro's eyes belonged with the lonely Gill-Man, passed away in early February of 2019.

Del Toro took to Twitter to express his grief, writing, "I mourn Julie Adams' passing. It hurts a place deep in me, where monsters swim" (@RealGDT). In multiple interviews del Toro cites the scene in which the Gill-Man swims underneath Adam's character Kay as one of his favorite and most influential moments in cinema history. While at age six he "realized that the monster and the bathing beauty could never end this tale together," at age fifty-three he released *The Shape of Water*, giving the Gill-Man the happy ending that he always wished the monster could have. At the end of *The Shape of Water*, in the last shot of the film, del Toro recreates the Gill-Man and Julie Adam's iconic swim. This time, instead of the innocent Kay swimming horizontally above the Gill-Man, not aware of his presence or her danger, Eliza, played by Sally Hawkins and bearing a striking resemblance to Julie Adams, floats in the water vertically, the Gill-Man circling her as he does in *The Creature of the Black Lagoon*, but now the image is reversed. He swims up to Eliza, both figures vertical and side-by-side, and, no longer an ominous threat as he was in 1954, breathes new life into her with a kiss, transforming the scars on her neck into gills, allowing her to join him permanently underwater. Del Toro transforms the story of the Gill-Man to make the monster the hero, simply a sympathetic and misunderstood creature. He is no longer hiding underneath the surface and in the shadows and bushes of the lagoon. As Agent Strickland declares in the last scene as the Gill-Man finally has his revenge, "Fuck,

[he is] a god" (01:55:25). Del Toro has taken a previously existing text, a previously canonized figure, and transformed his story into something new.

Figure 8: The Gill-Man swims under an unknowing Kay in *The Creature of the Black Lagoon, a threat to her safety.*

Figure 9: In *The Shape of Water*, the Gill-Man saves Eliza and allows her to breathe underwater and escape the real monsters above the surface.

Interestingly, it is a kiss from the Gill-Man that saves Eliza. She becomes a fairy tale-like princess figure, making the Gill-Man her Prince Charming. Mike Hill, one of the head designers tasked with bringing the creature to life, said in an interview, "Guillermo was adamant that the creature was not a monster, but actually a handsome leading man" (Zemler). He goes on to say that, in production meetings, the team would use *Beauty and the Beast* as an example of what they wanted to avoid: "[T]he Beast has to turn back into a handsome man to be acceptable. But no—why can't she just fall for the Beast as he is and love him as he is. Guillermo hated the idea that someone has to look beautiful and perfect to make a fairy tale" (Zemler). With *The Shape of Water* then, Guillermo takes canonized texts and stories from the literary and filmic canons and breathes new life into them just as the Gill-Man breathes new life into Eliza. The very idea of a Prince Charming is re-contextualized and re-presented, another instance of del Toro's transformational intertextuality.

THE HUMAN IN THE MONSTER AND THE MONSTER IN THE HUMAN

Exploring this further, del Toro completely upends the idea of what makes a monster. In the chapter "Guillermo del Toro: Matter Out of Place" of her co-edited anthology *The Transnational Fantasies of Guillermo del Toro* (2014), Ann Davies questions the ability of certain types of monsters to provoke fear or other responses from an audience. She quotes Jasia Reichhardt: "Only a humanoid can be a true monster. No monstrous cupboard, chair, plant or teapot could engender real fear, horror and fasciation all at once. The essential condition for a monster is that the human characteristics it

possesses must not be changed too far" (29). Reichhardt has, then, conceptualized the idea of the monster, or, at least, the idea of the horrifying monster, to be only those monsters that are at least somewhat humanoid. In the remainder of her chapter, Davies complicates this definition further by moving past the notion of monstrous bodies to monstrous places. She writes, "It is not only the bodies but the places and spaces that become incoherent, unfixed, and unstable. Even in a globalized, cyborg age, body and place still matter, but it is precisely because they do that del Toro's monsters seem monstrous" (41). In this way, Davies presents different ways of measuring the monster figure's ability to horrify, each of which works as a valid indicator of monstrosity. Davies uses del Toro's first film *Cronos* and his *Hellboy* franchise to illustrate the defining nature of both humanness and place in terms of the monster figure. However, written in 2014, this book predates *The Shape of Water*, which also plays on these themes. The Gill-Man is both humanoid and forced out of place from his home in the Amazon. However, the Gill-Man is not horrifying; he is, in fact, one of the film's protagonists. Davies and Reichhardt's conceptualization of the monster is specifically directed at the "horrifying" monster figure. In this case, *The Shape of Water*'s horrifying monster comes in the form of Michael Shannon's government agent Strickland. Strickland, too, is a creature out of place, forced into the suburbs with his family, plucked out of his exciting life in the wilderness of the Amazon just like the Gill-Man. He is, of course, humanoid as he is a human man, but his fingers, bitten off by the Gill-Man, decay and blacken throughout the film until a climactic scene in which he rips them from his body. He repels us because he is human but, as Davies describes the repellant monster, also "peculiar, misshapen, [and] revolting," his body unable to stay

together (30). In other words, he is almost human, but not quite. He almost belongs, but not quite. In this way, del Toro's films reconceptualize the idea of the monster figure. Like *Pan's Labyrinth* and Captain Vidal, del Toro's films find the horrifying monster identity within the human male, disconnecting the horrific from purely the monstrous body. The horrific becomes the monstrous soul. Here, del Toro's lifelong affinity for the Gill-Man and his interpretation of his identity as misunderstood, or, in other words, his fan appreciation of the Gill-Man, dictates the path of his filmmaking. His fan identity blends into his filmmaking identity to re-contextualize the texts from which he borrows.

The Shape of Water ends with the narrator reading a poem "whispered by someone in love hundreds of years ago: 'Unable to perceive the shape of you, I find you all around me. Your presence fills my eyes with your love. It humbles my heart, for you are everywhere'" (01:58:05). This is one of the rare moments in which del Toro does more than allude toward a text but uses it directly in his work. In the end credits, del Toro attributes the poem to the 11th and 12th century Sufi mystical poet Hakim Sanai. However, as several research librarians at the Library of Congress have noted, the translation that del Toro uses in the film does not exist in any known book or database (Armenti). In an interview discussing the poem, del Toro says he had free time after arriving to set early and decided to explore:

> When I have any free time, I say 'Let's go into a bookshop.' So we went to a bookshop, and I was browsing the shelves. I found this poem in a book about an illuminated poet talking about Allah, talking about God. I thought it was so magnificent. It moved me very much, and I bought the book. That

> day, we recorded Richard Jenkins reading it for the editing, and I knew that it was going to perfect for the film" (Heilman)

The Library of Congress researchers, intrigued by their inability to track down the exact poem, suggest that del Toro "may have relied on his memory of the poem's text," essentially retranslating an already existing translation (Armenti). That is, they suggest that del Toro adapts and transforms the already-existing text to create something new. While Hakim Sanai is credited at the end of the film for "Adapted Works," it is del Toro who performs the adaptation. Del Toro grew up a fannish bookworm who still in his middle-age enjoys wandering through random bookshops in his free time and collecting lost treasures for his personal enjoyment. It is only through these fannish tendencies and fannish excursions that del Toro can collect and experience the texts that will shape and influence his work. It is only his unique perspective that allows him to re-contextualize and re-present these texts in a new light.

Chapter Four: Genre Hybridity and Intermediality in the Work of Guillermo del Toro

WHAT IS A GHOST STORY?

While promoting *Crimson Peak*, Guillermo del Toro found himself at odds with the marketing team at Universal Pictures as they insisted upon advertising the film as a ghostly horror movie. Del Toro fought this, arguing that the film was not of the horror genre but was, in fact, a Gothic Romance. Lucas Hill-Paul criticizes the efforts of the marketing team, writing, "Not only do they directly ignore the director's intentions, but *Crimson Peak* is not what was advertised. The ghosts are not the main driving force as they appear to be in the marketing. It is the romance and mystery, the familial intrigue and the unravelling conspiracy [that drives the film]" (Hill-Paul). Many film critics published articles following *Crimson Peak*'s less-than-expected box office returns, blaming marketing for the film's performance. While the film's trailers highlighted ghostly jump-scares and figures creeping behind doorways, this is not what the film itself presents, and del Toro pushed back against this, saying in one interview, "*Crimson Peak* is not a horror movie but it has more of the tone of a fairy tale or a gothic romance, sort of a female-centric tale that has more to do with *Jane Eyre*" (Goldman). In the film itself, at one point, protagonist Edith Cushing is discussing the novel she is writing. She says, "It's not a ghost story. It's a story with a ghost in it." This is what del Toro wanted to convey in his pushback against the marketing team. Ghosts are generally associated with the horror genre, but del Toro challenges this idea, asserting that ghosts can belong to other genres as

well. In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which del Toro and his films support a theoretical understanding of genre as inherently hybrid and fluid. Del Toro's films flit across genres, challenging strict definitions and blurring the lines between generic categories.

As Kimberly Chun argues in her piece "What is a Ghost: An Interview with Guillermo del Toro," quoted in Chapter One of this thesis, del Toro has a tendency to mix genres, evoking themes from various—and seemingly unrelated—genres in a single film, such as westerns, ghost stories, coming-of-age tales, and war movies. This tendency to cross genres in his films continues across del Toro's blockbuster and his art house productions, his Spanish-language and his English-language films. Del Toro joins Chun and other scholars in acknowledging his affinity for genre hybridity, remarking to Chun, "The mix of genres [in *The Devil's Backbone*] was so adventurous. What I wanted to do was meld these two things, [the Western and the horror], seemingly so different, together" (30). In *The Devil's Backbone*, as with *Crimson Peak*, the protagonist is moved to an unfamiliar place, isolated and uncomfortable with the space around them. The young orphan Carlos is thrust into a world filled with bombs, ghosts, death, and destruction, while also learning from mentor-figures in the form of the elderly orphanage doctor, bonding with young boys his own age by playing with toys and drawing naked women, and attempting to unravel a mystery in the form of the Ghost's origins, identity, and reasons for haunting. Using del Toro's own words, the director is able to "meld" these various generic elements together seamlessly, the isolation evoking themes of the western, the

ghost creating instances of horror, and the slow unfolding of the murder creating the tensions reminiscent of a mystery crime film.

Niamh Thornton, in her essay "*Pacific Rim*: Reception, Readings, and Authority," (2014) further argues for the hybrid nature of genre across del Toro's oeuvre. However, she complicates this discussion of genre and del Toro by labelling the Mexican filmmaker as a "geek auteur" (122). Thornton writes, "Genre has its own way of governance, not least because it is the geek auteur's intention to pay homage to generic predecessors. The geek auteur occupies an interface between genre and auteur where the idea of a singular vision becomes complicated by multiple referents and influences" (122). In other words, Thornton argues that a filmmaker cannot be wholly subservient to the dictations of genre and be an original auteurist simultaneously. It is this search to both borrow from and depart from convention that allows del Toro to create his own unique hybrid version of multiple genres and allows him to take ownership of his own auteurist voice. The hybridity of his relationship to genre allows him to more clearly pave his own path and his own creative vision.

However, del Toro is by no means unique in the mere act of blending generic conventions. In fact, many theorists object to the very idea of genre categorizations as objectively definable. For example, Andrew Tudor writes that "Genre notions are not critics' classifications made for special purposes; they are sets of cultural conventions. Genre is what we collectively believe it to be" (7). In other words, if genre is determined by continuously evolving cultural conventions, there are no set generic classifications.

Genre is, in its very essence, fluid and evolving. Rick Altman supports this approach in his "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," writing:

> As long as Hollywood genres are conceived as Platonic categories, existing outside the flow of time, it will be impossible to reconcile *genre theory*, which has always accepted as given the timelessness of a characteristic structure, and *genre history*, which has concentrated on chronicling the development, deployment, and disappearance of the same structure. (8)

Altman goes on to argue that film genres not only overlap with and borrow from one another but that Hollywood genres borrow, from the beginning, from other forms of media and adapt or transform over time as the filmic medium demands.

Del Toro's work, then, certainly falls in line with Altman's view of genre hybridity. Del Toro borrows from the generic conventions of multiple forms of media, including literature, theater, and paintings. In Chapter Two of this thesis, I examined the ways in which del Toro has borrowed from Gothic literary conventions in his work. Almost all of his films feature a voice-over narrator, a generic convention that stems from literary sources. However, del Toro also draws from theatrical elements in his work. In the same interview with Chun, del Toro discusses the theatrical elements at play in *The Devil's Backbone*: "What I did with [the young cast of boys] was essentially exercises of theater, basic theater. We explored together a little bit of the Sanford Meisner method, a theatrical school of acting which for lends itself beautifully to cinema…. It's almost a ballet" (31). In this way, del Toro's use of various generic elements is derived, in part, from his relationship with and desire to borrow from other forms of media.

In this next section, I will examine how del Toro's relationship with various forms of media outside of cinema allow him to craft unique stories and to better communicate with his audience. I argue that these tendencies to interact with various forms of media make del Toro an intermedial filmmaker: one who pushes the natural hybridity of cinema beyond its inherent state of inbetweenness. In her essay "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality," Dr. Irina Rajewsky, a leading scholar in intermedial and transmedial studies, writes, "'Intermedial' designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media" (46). Del Toro, in each of his films, crosses these borders between media by drawing from sources other than cinema and allowing the specific tendencies of each medium he uses to improve communication both within the diegesis and for the non-diegetic audience.

PAN'S LABYRINTH AND INTERMEDIALITY: COMMUNICATING WITH THE PAST

In *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), Guillermo del Toro blends various forms of media together to communicate with and understand the past. In his work "Identity History is Not Enough," Eric Hobsbawm examines the ways in which the past is studied, written about, and understood, differentiating between an historian's approach to history and a community's approach to history. An historian's approach, according to Hobsbawm, must be grounded in objective fact that follows "the rules and criteria of our discipline" (269). A community's approach to history, however, is grounded in "memories and meanings which could not hold for the rest of us [who were not there]" (268). In moving toward an identity history upheld by memory, then, communities and nations can construct their own

mythology. They are not concerned with objective truth, at least as it is understood in the eyes of historians concerned with universality, but in crafting a memorial narrative as "a way of coming to terms with a trauma" (268). While Hobsbawm is critiquing this approach to history, del Toro's film *Pan's Labyrinth* follows a path similar to this idea of mythology created through memory in its exploration of the history of trauma. Adopting the form of a fairy tale, *Pan's Labyrinth* places the Spanish Civil War in the context of a created mythology in an attempt to reconcile history and memory rather than separate them.

When the Fascist regime ended in isolated Spain, the country instated the "Pact of Forgetting," which was an agreement to put the bleak past behind them and forget for the sake of moving forward. This "enforced forgetting of the Spanish Civil War" prevented Spanish citizens from being able to confront the past and its issues (Sinha 179). In this way, Spanish citizens were allowed neither their own memorial narrative nor the historian's carefully documented history. Everything was left to be forgotten. In his essay "How We Know the Past," David Lowenthal discusses memory as necessary in understanding the character of the past and constructing identity. He writes, "All awareness of the past is founded on memory" (193). Further, private memory can only endure through mutual confirmation with others that this memory is shared: "Sharing and validating memories sharpens them and promotes their recall; events we alone know about are less certainly, less easily evoked" (196). In this way, the "Pact of Forgetting" the Fascist regime of the Spanish Civil War would, cumulatively, over time, remove the event from the past. If, as Lowenthal claims, all awareness of the past is founded on memory, and these memories are not shared and validated, they will eventually die, and this awareness of the past will

no longer exist. Del Toro, with his film, then, allows, or forces, Spanish citizens to look back and confront their nation's past. He does not allow them to forget; he does not allow their memories to be erased.

By telling the universal history of the Spanish Civil War through the lens of a fairy tale centered around an individual, del Toro satisfies the human desire for narrative in regards to history. As Lowenthal describes the relationship between fiction and history, "Each genre has encroached on the domain once exclusive to the other; history has grown more like fiction, fiction more like history (227). Lowenthal was speaking of contemporary fiction within a historical moment, but this idea applies to del Toro's work as well. *Pan's Labyrinth* is intimately concerned with the act of memory, both diegetically and extradiegetically. Just as Ofelia must learn to remember the magical world to which her soul belongs, the Spanish people must collectively engage in the act of remembering their own past. Ofelia and the Spanish people both attempt to achieve this connection to history through fiction and narrative. Extradiegetically, the fiction of the film *Pan's Labyrinth* crafts a mythological narrative out of past historical events. Diegetically, Ofelia attempts to reconnect with the forgotten history of her magical home-world through the direct engagement of various relics, which together craft a narrative. At the beginning of the film, Ofelia reads a book of fairy tales. It is this book of fairy tales that allows her to communicate with the wood insect that leads her to the faun. The faun, in turn, gives Ofelia a book: the Book of Crossroads, her sole method of communication with the magical realm. These various texts and artifacts—these forms of media—that she encounters throughout the film allow her to reconstruct, piece by piece, the history of her magical

world. It is only when all of the media come together that Ofelia is able to understand and communicate with the world around her.

In this section, I will examine the ways in which Ofelia is only able to communicate with the past and with those around her by finding the appropriate medium with which to communicate. Del Toro relies on various media to tell his stories—literature, oral storytelling, illustrations, lullabies, paintings. It is only through this practice of intermediality, of various media working together, that del Toro can tell his story and Ofelia can communicate with and understand the world around her. Ofelia fails in her tasks only when she fails to use the appropriate medium to communicate and to understand. In his 1964 work *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man*, Marshall McLuhan declares that "the medium is the message" (7). Whether it be cinema, literature, theater, or painting, the medium through which one receives a message affects the way in which the message is received and, ultimately, determines its content. However, this process becomes more complex when multiple media interact with one another. Cinema, as an inherently hybrid medium, drawing, since its conception, from photography, theater, and literature, then complicates the ways in which a message can be processed. Intermedial filmmakers, those filmmakers who push the natural hybridity of cinema beyond its inherent state of inbetweenness, such as Wes Anderson and Peter Greenaway in addition to Guillermo del Toro, then, necessarily change the message as they create a cacophony of media. This section will analyze the ways in which, both diegetically and extradiegetically, the medium affects the ways in which people are able to communicate, and, more specifically, how that communication is expressed through the trauma of memory in *Pan's Labyrinth.*

I began this thesis with a quote del Toro gave in an interview for *Pan's Labyrinth* in which he discusses the mixture of dark events and childhood: "The one thing that alchemy understands and fairy tale lore understands is that you need the vile matter for magic to flourish. You need lead to turn it into gold. You need the two things for the process" (Murray). This statement, while about the structure of fairy tales, applies to del Toro's approach to filmmaking as well. In *Pan's Labyrinth*, del Toro uses a mixture of various media, both those forms of media considered base, or low, art and those forms considered high art, in order to tell a story. The use of music, literature, oral storytelling, and other forms of media is necessary for del Toro to efficiently and clearly tell his story. These various forms of media allow for clear communication, both on a diegetic and a non-diegetic level. Diegetically, Ofelia needs these forms of media to communicate with the worlds she occupies, while, on a non-diegetic level, del Toro is able to better convey information and meaning to the film's viewers. Del Toro understands that the various media must work together in order for the "magic to flourish."

In the very opening of the film, del Toro uses multiple elements of media, both sound design and image, coupling the sound of a woman humming with non-diegetic written text. The sound of the hummed lullaby works to set the tone of the film, while the text, displayed on title cards, clarifies the setting for the viewer: "Spain, 1944" (00:01:17). The title cards also provide context, alerting the viewer to the end of the Spanish Civil War and the presence of "armed groups still fighting the new Fascist regime" (00:01:29). In addition to the lullaby and the written text, the diegetic sounds of a young girl's ragged breathing pull the viewer into the action.

Because the sound of the breathing is played over the title cards, del Toro is able to transition seamlessly from text to image, opening on the young Ofelia, the source of the breathing, as she lies helplessly on the ground. The blood pouring from her hand and nose flows back into her body, the scene playing in reverse. The camera centers on her face and a man's voice begins speaking, a non-diegetic narrator. The camera soars into Ofelia's eye with del Toro employing computer-generated imagery. When the camera escapes the momentary darkness of the inside of the eye, the film has entered another world with Ofelia serving as the bridge between the two. The narrator introduces the viewer to this new world, "A long time ago, in the Underground realm…" (00:01:42). The narrator describes this as a world "where there are no lies or pain," bringing it into immediate contrast with the dark, bloody, and cold 1944 Spain from which the film has just departed. Del Toro uses the voice-over narration to communicate information efficiently. While title cards with written text were able to provide context for 1944 Spain, the oral storytelling of the narration provides the background for Princess Moanna and the Underground realm.

These two worlds, Spain and the magical realm, continue to be intertwined throughout the film through the character of Ofelia. As she and her mother travel to the army base to meet Captain Vidal, Ofelia reads a book full of fairy tales. She studies a picture of a fairy as her pregnant mother looks on disapprovingly. When the cars stop in the middle of the woods to allows Ofelia's mother to breathe fresh air, Ofelia explores. She comes across an insect-like creature, reminiscent of the fairy whose picture she has been studying in her book. When Ofelia and her mother are sleeping at the army base later that night, the creature finds her again and tries to entice Ofelia to follow it. However,

Ofelia is hesitant. Because the two cannot communicate through the spoken word, Ofelia shows the creature the illustration of the fairy in the storybook. The creature stares at the picture, and the transforms itself into a replica. Now that the creature, or fairy, has assumed a form familiar to Ofelia, she immediately agrees to follow it. The fairy ultimately leads Ofelia to the labyrinth and to the faun, where she learns her true identity. If not for literature and its illustrations, Ofelia would never have been able to communicate with the fairy. It is the various media that drive the story forward and allow communication and deeper understanding.

Figure 10: The fairy is able to communicate with Ofelia by mimicking the fairy tale book illustration, assuming a form familiar to her.

When Ofelia meets the faun, he gives her a book: the Book of Crossroads. He tells her that this book will provide instructions that she must follow in order to complete her

tasks. "Open it when you are alone," he says, "It will show you your future, show you what must be done" (00:24:04). The Book of Crossroads is Ofelia's connection to the magical world when she is trapped in Fascist Spain. It acts as her sole method of communication with the Underground realm. Ofelia fully embraces and accepts this medium, talking to the book and interacting with it. At one point, Ofelia opens the book and the page appears covered in blood. The blood shapes itself on the page into the form of Fallopian tubes. As Ofelia examines the image, her pregnant mother screams in the bedroom. She falls ill with the baby and is forced into bed rest, mirroring the image on the page. The Book of Crossroads further connects the two distinct worlds.

Ofelia, throughout the film, is able to utilize the various media in unique situations as means of communication. Her storybook allows her to communicate with the fairy, the Book of Crossroads connects her to the magical world, and oral storytelling allows her to communicate with her unborn younger brother. Ofelia speaks to him while he is still in the womb, telling him stories and preparing him for life. On their first night at the army base as Ofelia and her mother lie in bed, her mother says, "Your brother's at it again. Tell him one of your stories; I'm sure he'll calm down" (00:13:25). Ofelia tells her brother a story, set in another world, of a lone rose atop a mountain. The fairy flitters back and forth from that magical world to the dreary bedroom in which Ofelia and her mother lay, again acting as a connector between the two worlds. Later, however, when her mother has fallen severely ill from the pregnancy, and Ofelia's circumstances and the oppressive Vidal have wearied her down, Ofelia cannot muster the energy to tell her brother a new tale. Instead, she whispers a desperate plea for her mother's life. In both instances, Ofelia attempts to

communicate with her brother. However, at the same time, she is also telling these stories for herself. The first night when she tells the story of the rose, Ofelia had just admitted to her mother that she was scared. Her oral storytelling process is as much of an escape and calming mechanism for her as it is for her restless little brother.

There are some characters, however, with whom Ofelia is not able to communicate. Most prominently, Ofelia, representative of the child-like naivety and innocence of the resistance, and Captain Vidal, representative of the extreme, cold Fascist state, can never see eye-to-eye. Upon their first meeting, Ofelia offers the captain her hand. However, she fails to follow the code of etiquette to which Captain Vidal adheres when she offers her left hand instead of her right. He becomes instantly furious with her and responds with physical force, squeezing her hand. The extradiegetic viewer soon comes to learn that violence and brute force is the only form of communication that Vidal understands. The two are not speaking the same language: Ofelia fails to communicate properly in Captain Vidal's preferred code of behavior, and Captain Vidal responds with a physical force Ofelia cannot understand or properly react to. Communication between the two does not improve. Captain Vidal's inability to understand Ofelia's reasons for hiding the mandrake root under her mother's bed leads to the death of her mother. When tasked to bring her younger brother to the labyrinth, Ofelia chooses to sneak and run because she knows any attempt to explain herself to Captain Vidal would be fruitless. Their relationship ends in a deplorable act of violence, with the captain shooting and killing Ofelia. Because the two cannot understand one another's motivations, cannot communicate, the only possible outcome is death, destruction, and loss.

Within the magical world, Ofelia is unable to communicate with the giant toad. The toad lives inside a tree, slowly killing and poisoning it, as it fattens itself on bugs. Ofelia asks the toad, "Aren't you ashamed? Living down here, eating all these bugs and growing fat as the tree dies?" (00:36:28). A similar question could be asked of the Fascist regime: 'Aren't you ashamed? Living up there, thriving as the people suffer?' The toad is clearly meant as the magical world counterpart of Captain Vidal. He eats as the tree dies, just as the scene is intercut with shots Captain Vidal's luxurious feast, where he and his colleagues overeat while the Spanish people under his command must wait in bread lines every day. However, the toad, and the Fascists, cannot understand, or choose not to understand, Ofelia. The toad responds to Ofelia's admonishment by licking her face aggressively and burping all over her, the utmost disregard and disrespect. When Ofelia tricks the toad into eating the three magical stones, the toad regurgitates its insides, its skin falling away. The mask covering its inner secrets disappears, revealing all. Ofelia must retrieve the key from the stomach of the toad, the ultimate Fascist. Tellingly, this key resembles the one held by Captain Vidal: the key to the storage shed holding all of the necessary supplies and food.

Later in the film, Ofelia encounters the Pale Man, a monstrous figure who feeds on babies and young children. Ofelia can only reach his world, can only connect with him by drawing a doorway with a stick of magic chalk. Once in the Pale Man's world, Ofelia becomes enticed by the sumptuous feast laid out before her. Ofelia does not respond to the vicious paintings of the Pale Man eating and killing babies. The pile of abandoned children's shoes and the faint echoes of babies crying in the background are not enough for

her to ignore the enticing call of the feast laid out before her. Ofelia ignores her instructions to not touch anything and begins eating grapes from the table. Ofelia fails to read the clear signals from the Pale Man that he is a dangerous monster.

Fortunately, Ofelia is able to escape the Pale Man by using her magic chalk. When she reenters the world of Fascist Spain, however, Ofelia has not escaped to a world in which she is universally understood. Consistently, throughout the film, Ofelia's mother does not understand. As they drive through the woods, Ofelia's mother remarks, "I don't understand why you had to bring so many books, Ofelia" (00:03:15). Later, when her mother teases a surprise gift, Ofelia asks if it is a book. Her mother scoffs at her and replies, "No, it is something much better than a book" (00:12:25). The gift is later revealed to be a dress for Ofelia to wear to the captain's dinner party. Ofelia and her mother, while they love one another deeply, do not understand one another. Ofelia angrily lashes out at her mother for forcing them to move to the army base with Captain Vidal. Ofelia cannot understand why they had to leave their life in the city. Her mother tries to explain, saying that she was lonely. Ofelia, as a child, cannot understand this sentiment from her mother. She naively replies, "I'm with you. You weren't alone. You were never alone" (00:13:15). Her mother simply says, "When you're older, you'll understand" (00:13:20). Ofelia's mother falls severely ill with the baby and must be committed to bed rest. When the statuesque faun instructs Ofelia to leave a mandrake root under her mother's bed, her mother, again, does not understand, and Ofelia fails to communicate with her. Ofelia's mother throws the mandrake root into the fire, sending it and the child she is carrying into excruciating pain.

Ofelia's mother is forced into labor and suffers complications. She dies during childbirth, essentially because of her inability to accept and to understand.

Unlike her relationship with her mother, Ofelia finds a close confidant in Mercedes, a servant to Captain Vidal. Mercedes takes an immediate interest in Ofelia, whereas the other adults overlook her. Ofelia feels instantly comfortable expressing herself to and communicating with Mercedes. Mercedes listen when Ofelia tells her that Captain Vidal is not her real father, a point Ofelia very much wants to stress. Whereas her mother remarked, that "it's just a word," Mercedes listens to Ofelia and understands the importance that Ofelia attaches to the word "father" (00:05:33). In turn, Ofelia observes and understands Mercedes better than anyone else at the army base. Ofelia discovers during her first day at the camp that Mercedes has been aiding the rebels in the mountains. She keeps Mercedes' secret for her. Later, when Ofelia is shunned from her ill mother's room and in the throes of distress, Mercedes comes to comfort her. Ofelia asks Mercedes if she knows any lullabies. Mercedes replies, "Only one, but I don't remember the words." Ofelia responds, "I don't care. I want to hear it anyway" (00:50:06).

Mercedes begins to hum the same melody that has dominated the score of the film. The lullaby now serves the dual purpose of comforting Ofelia on a narrative level and setting the tone for the non-diegetic viewer. Javier Navarrete, the composer for *Pan's Labyrinth,* said in an interview that "del Toro gave clear instructions on the role of music in the movie to ensure that 'the melody echoed the fairy tale'" (Gomez-Castellano). Del Toro reportedly instructed, "We should find a lullaby to be the central motif of the movie, and have everything come out of that melody." The lullaby "offers an alternative way of

communication and remembrance" (Gomez-Castellano). Continuing the analogy between Ofelia and the citizens of Spain, the words of the lullaby are not important. Ofelia can be comforted by the soothing sounds alone, while the Spanish citizens do not have to look back and remember exactly. It is just important that they look back.

At the beginning of the film, when she first encounters the fairy, Ofelia picks a stone off the ground. The stone is an eye, belonging to an old, abandoned statue in the middle of the wood, itself another medium. Ofelia approaches the statue and replaces its eye in its eye socket. She gives back the past its sight, something that del Toro does with this film. While Ofelia encourages a dialogue between her two worlds and innovative communication between people, del Toro encourages a dialogue between the Spanish citizens about their past and the harsh truths it contains. For both Ofelia and del Toro, any media available can serve to further this communication. It is the responsibility of the viewer and of the participant to engage with each form of media in order to approach real acceptance and understanding.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This thesis has examined representations of hybridity through the lens of a single auteur, Guillermo del Toro. Using del Toro's films as case studies, this thesis has analyzed the ways in which del Toro expresses this hybridity through his transnationality, his use of intertextuality, and his tendency to subvert genres and blend forms of media. In the introductory chapter, I summarize previous scholarly literature on del Toro's career, while tracing the ways in which del Toro is seen as a figure who crosses boundaries. Throughout this thesis, I use both del Toro's public persona and his filmic works as illustrations of the ways in which he is able to cross boundaries, to erase the lines in the sand. In an interview with *Time Out* magazine del Toro says:

> I see myself as a perennial expatriate, because frankly, I don't think I fit comfortably in any conventional form of filmmaking and I feel at the same time, depending on the project, I fit into many different ones. If you ask me, I alternate between truly bizarre, what you would call 'Hollywood' movies and truly bizarre, what you would call 'arthouse' movies. But, then again, I don't feel the movies fit perfectly in either one of them. The same question would be, am I a Spanish filmmaker, a Mexican filmmaker, a Hollywood filmmaker? I feel I'm just a filmmaker who is hopefully equally at odds with all of the above definitions. (Jenkins 2006, as cited in Shaw 2013, p. 80)

In this one quote, del Toro illustrates many aspects of his hybridity: his avoidance of one single national identity, his affinity for both the blockbuster and the arthouse film, and his

desire to avoid clear-cut definitions and restrictions. In recent years, since he spoke these words in 2006, del Toro has further crossed boundaries by asserting himself as not only a "filmmaker" in the sense of auteur director but also a producer, an influencer, a curator, and a voice for the voiceless.

In Chapter Two, I examine this Hollywood-arthouse dichotomy and challenge the idea that these two sides of del Toro are wholly distinct. By closing analyzing *Pacific Rim* and *The Devil's Backbone*, I argue that each half of del Toro's identity bleeds into the other, his Hollywood blockbuster productions influencing his arthouse works and vice versa. In recent years, the two have become wholly indistinguishable, with both *Crimson Peak* and *The Shape of Water* fitting into both molds. Further, in this chapter, I examine the ways in which, through these films and through his efforts in promoting Mexican filmmaking in young artists, del Toro keeps his transnational identity alive even after leaving Mexico.

With the continuing ascension of the Three Amigos, both critically and commercially, and ongoing tensions surrounding the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies, scholarship concerning the state of Mexican film, Mexican auteurs in Hollywood, and transnationality in media is rapidly increasing. After del Toro's Oscar wins in 2017, multiple entertainment magazines compared his victories to the state of Mexico-Trump relations, one headline reading, "Mexicans hail Oscars as sign of cultural sway despite Trump" (Boyle). While these popular media articles focus on del Toro's sway in Hollywood, however, there is a need for academic scholarship that explores the effects of the Three Amigos' growing status and influence on the Mexican film industry

itself. Del Toro continues providing opportunities for young Mexican filmmakers through his scholarship programs and his support of the Guadalajara Film Festival, and it would be a worthwhile academic endeavor to study the effects that these interactions with Mexico will have in the long-term. Does the success of the Three Amigos help to continue the status quo of Hollywood "stealing" talent from Mexico, or have the filmmakers' efforts to support Mexican filmmaking stimulated a once-dying industry?

In Chapter Three, I examined the ways in which del Toro crosses boundaries through the use of intertextuality, pulling from various texts and sources to create his own artwork. By tracing his Twitter activity in which he promotes and encourages other artists while expressing his own fan identity, I was able to begin to analyze the ways in which del Toro combines his filmmaking identity with his fannish tendencies. Through case studies of *Crimson Peak* and *The Shape of Water*, I was able to examine how del Toro engages with and re-contextualizes the texts of which he is a fan, using these "relics," as he terms them, to create something wholly new and personal.

Del Toro's interactions with other texts is unique, I argue, because of his emotional connection to the sources from which he draws. The texts influence his work on an emotional level rather than purely visual. Further, rather than relying on any one specific text to inspire his work, del Toro draws, instead, from the fan canon, or fanon, understanding monsters through the lens of their popular culture reputation as well as their actual representation in media. Del Toro's works attempt to change the popular culture reputation of monsters in general. With *Hellboy*, *The Shape of Water*, and his other films, del Toro glorifies and humanizes the monster figure. This tendency to

humanize the monstrous is found in the filmographies of other directors as well, including Tim Burton and David Lynch. Future expansion of this research could include a study of the evolution of the humanized monster in literary and film history through the lens of particular off-beat auteurs.

In Chapter Four, I examined how del Toro subverts genre and blends media to tell his stories in his own unique way. Performing a close analysis of *Pan's Labyrinth*, I was able to examine how del Toro uses forms of media outside of cinema to both illustrate film's inherent intermediality and use that intermediality to tell old stories in new ways. Through these various forms of media, both del Toro and Ofelia are able to communicate with the world around them in ways that they would not be able to do with only one medium alone. It is through the combination, through the crossing of the boundaries, that the two are able to succeed.

While I focused on methods of communication within only *Pan's Labyrinth*, each of del Toro's films deals, in some way, with issues of miscommunication or the inability to communicate. In *The Shape of Water*, protagonist Eliza is mute, and, in a climactic emotional moment, she signs, "What am I? I move my mouth like him. I make no sound like him. What does that make me? When he looks at me—the way he looks at me—he does not know what I lack or how I am incomplete. He sees me for what I am, as I am." In this film too, then, characters struggle to communicate with and be understood by the world around them. There is an opportunity here for an in-depth study on issues of communication and understanding in del Toro's films.

Moving forward, my thesis leaves open much room for further study. For example, by choosing to focus on solely del Toro's efforts as a director, I have excluded a number of projects in which del Toro was centrally involved, including his work as producer, author, and writer, as well as his work in television. Further, more research could be done to understand the direct relationship between del Toro and his fans. Here, I have analyzed del Toro's identity as a fan, but more work is needed to examine how del Toro's fan react to and engage with him, both on Twitter and outside of the platform.

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